

THE DIVINE COMMAND:-

*GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD,
AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.*

MARK XVI. 15.



THE ABIDING PROMISE:-

*AND, LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS,
EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD.*

MATT. XXVIII. 20.

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The missionary work of the
church

M. J.

THE MISSIONARY WORK

OF

THE CHURCH:

ITS PRINCIPLES, HISTORY, CLAIMS, AND
PRESENT ASPECTS.

BY

✓
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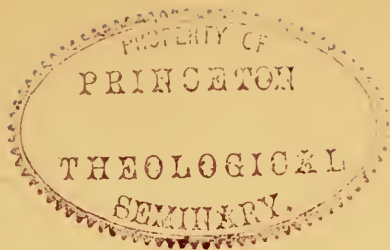
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PREFACE.

DR. STOWELL'S "Missionary Church," which, in a somewhat modified form, is reprinted in the following pages, is like one of those works of ancient art, some time lost to the world by adverse events, and subsequently restored to the light of day and the appreciative gaze of mankind.

Had the gifted and lamented author lived, he would have greatly enriched our Christian literature with the productions of his active and well-stored mind; and among these I cannot but think would have been fresh editions of this admirable book. I am thankful that the honour—for such indeed I deem it, alike because of the grandeur and importance of the subject, and that my name is thus associated with his to whom I am so deeply indebted—has been left to me of bringing this new edition before the public. A work so eloquent, so fervid, and dealing so admirably with the first principles which underlie all Missionary effort, should not be lost. Of its kind there is but one work

comparable with it;* and it is now needed quite as much as when the earlier editions were issued.

True, the hostility of the last generation to Missions has passed away, but the fervour of their early friends has not spread as widely as could have been wished. The general tone of opinion on this subject, in secular circles at the present day, is one of scepticism; and even in Christian society something of the same scepticism largely prevails, and is associated with a sad and profound indifference toward the whole subject. By this I mean, that among professing Christians generally there is no deep, adequate, and habitual regret that so large a portion of our world is still heathen, and so small a portion of it Christian—there is no general conviction that the former suffer irreparable loss by not receiving the privileges of the latter—there is no impelling belief that it is the grand duty and highest honour of Christians to seek the evangelization of the heathen;—also, that there is a large amount of scepticism as to the genuineness of the work now being done by Missionaries and Missionary Societies—and that there is no fixed and inspiring faith regarding the splendid future in reserve for our race, as the consequence of the zeal and devotion of the Church.

* Dr. Winter Hamilton's "Missions: their Authority, Scope, and Encouragement."

A writer would not be justified in making such grave statements unless he had substantial ground for doing so. This I assuredly have, and could give, were this the place.

Dr. Stowell's book is admirably fitted to correct much of this, and to create a higher and nobler state of opinion and feeling than is now prevalent. The proof he gives that it is the grand duty of the Church of Christ to seek the conversion of the world, is clear and irrefragable ; and were it but generally received and wrought into the mind and heart, through the eloquence and devoutness of the author's utterances, a new era would speedily dawn alike for the Church and for the world.

My own share in the following pages is soon indicated. I have revised the whole of Dr. Stowell's work, omitting some passages which now seem unnecessary, and altering a few others, so as to bring them into harmony with the present time ; but leaving as much as I could of the original composition untouched—for I feared to mar its beauty and effectiveness. All the notes I have added, together with three chapters—the first, seventh, and eleventh. That which I have supplied is chiefly information ; and in all cases I have striven to be scrupulously accurate, both in fact and in date.

To Dr. Stowell's family I am indebted for their kind permission to reissue the work in its present form, and to the Rev. William Stowell for valuable suggestions.

To the candour and judgment of its readers I now commend this book. And may the Divine Spirit incline all who read it to receive, exemplify, and propagate whatever it contains of truth !

EDWARD STORROW.

RUGBY, *December* 20, 1872.

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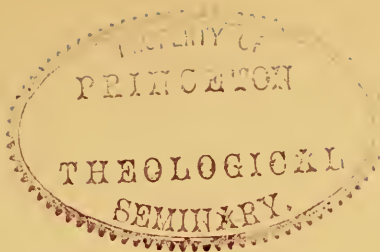
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THE
MISSIONARY WORK OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRESENT RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF THE WORLD.

Relative Proportion of the various Religions to the Earth's Population: Protestantism; Romanism; the Greek and Oriental Churches; Mahomedanism; Buddhism; Hinduism; lower Forms of Heathenism.—Influence of Religion on National Life.—Protestantism the Highest Form of Christianity.—Its Purifying and Elevating Power.—Romanism opposed to National Growth.—Debasing Influence of all Superstitions.—State of Society under Mahomedanism, Buddhism, and Hinduism.—Fearful Character of the Hindu gods, and of the Rites and Teachings of Hindu Worship.—Aspect of the Case to the Philanthropist and the Christian.

EIGHTEEN centuries and a half have passed away since the Saviour of mankind gave the command to His disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and still two-thirds of the human race are heathen. All Europe, with but the slightest exception on its south-eastern frontier, is, nominally at least, Christian. America, save with similar exception on its northern, southern, and western borders, has received the faith which had its birth in Palestine. But Africa and Asia are yet almost entirely Pagan; and the latter is more than twice as populous as the two former united.

A more minute analysis of the religious condition of the world will fittingly introduce all that follows in this volume respecting the duty of the Church of Christ to seek its evangelization, and will present a state of affairs which should shock, sadden, and stimulate every Christian mind.

The entire population of the earth is supposed to number one thousand two hundred and fifty millions.

About one hundred and sixteen millions of these profess Protestantism. One hundred and sixty millions adhere to the Church of Rome. More than eighty millions belong to the Greek and other Oriental Churches. Mahomedanism has not less than one hundred and seventy-five million followers. Hinduism has almost an equal number. Buddhism may boast of not less than four hundred and twenty million disciples; whilst more barbarous and less systematised polytheisms exert their malign influence over one hundred and twenty million souls.*

It will be seen from these numbers, which approximate as near to the truth as circumstances will allow, that but one in eleven of the earth's population is a Protestant;—that of the Christian world the latter do not form one-third;—that we are singly far outnumbered by Mahomedans, Hindus, and Buddhists; and that Protestants stand to Pagans in the proportion of only one to seven-and-a-half.

If we examine the social, moral, and political state of the nations and tribes professing these religions, we find that just to the extent that they have corrupted

* See "A Manual of Missionary Facts and Principles," p. 6. (J. SNOW and Co.)

and left the inspired conceptions of truth and duty given to us in the Bible, do they fall away towards barbarism, demoralization, and wretchedness.

As Protestantism is the closest realisation of New Testament Christianity, so it is associated with a higher form of civilization than anywhere else is seen. The nations professing it have steadily grown in freedom, virtue, knowledge, wealth, and power, as no others have, until the hopes and the destinies of the world lie in their hands. For if we inquire for the principles and usages which are most necessary for man, in his individual, social, or national relations, we find them pre-eminently among Protestants. They have that which, mentally, morally, and relatively, would enrich all the heathen world, whilst no province of that world has anything to give in exchange which would enrich them.

Romanism is a lower form of Christianity than Protestantism, and it is identified with a lower type of civilization and morality. The principles representing the two have been in active operation, face to face with each other, for three hundred and fifty years, and during this time they have completely changed places; England, the United States, and Prussia, all rising to the first rank, and the Catholic states retiring from it. The fall of Spain and Portugal, from a position similar to the one now held by England, to their present abjectness; the poverty and unrest of Ireland; the instability and degradation of the South American States; the weakness and demoralization of Italy, until it broke with the Papacy; and the chronic agitation of France;—all prove that when the rights of God are

usurped, and His truth corrupted, decay and disaster will retributively follow the transgression.

The Greek and Oriental Churches are less dangerous to the well-being of nations than Popery, because they are less ambitious of priestly and political power, but they are equally fatal to all free, spiritual, and intellectual life.

Mahomedanism, like a cancer, has spread itself over most of the regions which formed the world prior to the Christian era; for whilst dominant in Turkey, Arabia, Persia, all the states of Northern Africa, and among the tribes of Central Asia, it has also penetrated into Central Africa, into Western China, and the glorious islands of Indo-China, and can boast of twenty million adherents in India alone. It has never yet lifted a people higher than semi-civilization. It ossifies all that it touches. It is, in every country where it is dominant, identified with forms of government and administration so utterly corrupt and despotic that even the best of them no body of Englishmen would endure. Slavery, polygamy, the degradation of women, and intense intolerance, are its invariable concomitants. It has marvellous power to assimilate every individual disciple to the character of Mahomed (would that Christianity showed equal power to make us like Christ!), and no character is so intolerant, repellent, unamiable, and dangerous.

Buddhism, the faith of Ceylon, Siam, Burmah, Japan, China, and Thibet, has more adherents than Christianity, or even than Moslemism and Hinduism united. It, too, has never lifted a people beyond semi-barbarism. Beneath its influence their growth, if up to that point

rapid, has ceased, and given place to the stagnation of a thousand years. It has a form of morality, fair enough to the eye, but utterly powerless over the heart and life; and a conception of the divine and the future so vague, dreamlike, and hopeless, that scepticism, apathy, or despair is its usual result.

Hinduism is the religion of but one race, nor can it possibly be the profession of any other.* Of all superstitions this is the most incongruous, irrational, and demoralizing. Thus, whilst acknowledging one god, it has built but one temple to his honour; though it has erected myriads to one or other of the three hundred and thirty million subordinate divinities it recognises. Viewed from different standpoints it is seen to be monotheistic, pantheistic, polytheistic, tritheistic, and atheistic. It has not one trait of that exquisite beauty and grace which characterised the ancient polytheisms of Greece and Rome. Without one quality to commend it to the respect and admiration of other races, it treats them all with grotesque contempt. Its social and moral influence is blighting and cruel beyond anything the world has ever witnessed. For centuries it taught that the holiest deed of a wife was to immolate herself on the funeral pile of her husband;—that she who did not this must be for ever a widow, from whose life all joy and sunshine should carefully be shut out;—that mental culture was for all the sex a bane and not a blessing;—that female infanticide was preferable to caste pollution and to

* India and China together contain nearly one-half the population of the globe. Power may be in the north-west, but the mass of humanity is in the south-east of the earth.

non-marriage ;—and that the worship most pleasing to the gods is that which is associated with the extremest license of the sensual appetites, or the utmost infliction of pain and degradation on the individual worshipper.

Besides these great systems of superstition, there are numerous rude polytheisms found throughout Africa, Polynesia, the Indian Archipelago, and the tribes and races thinly scattered over the hill regions of India and Central Asia and South America. All these tribes are barbarians, in whose religious notions and practices there are no elevating or purifying qualities.

If we carefully analyse the influence of all these religions, we discover that, diverse as they are, they all operate disastrously in certain directions, though, of course, in different degrees.

They all DEGRADE RATHER THAN ELEVATE.

In no existing instance have any people outside Christendom risen from barbarism or from semi-barbarism to civilization. On the other hand, every Christian country, save Italy, was once barbarous, and has risen toward civilization just to the degree that it has become Christian. The rude tribes of Asia and Africa, and of the Pacific and Indian Oceans, are still in a state of nature. China and India had made no advance for two thousand years previous to their contact with Christian nations; whilst in morals and religious usages they had actually deteriorated ;—in the one case allowing a vague but simple monotheism to become obscured by a ghastly fear and reverence for demons and spirits; and in the other by the usurpation of a crowd of gods more monstrous, cruel, and immoral than even Phœnicia, Babylon, or Canaan ever recognised.

Races who believe in caste, the transmigration of the soul, and nirvana, or absorption into the essence of the deity, will be preserved from utter barbarism, but they can never rise to a high degree of civilization.

Islamism has been the faith of most countries now professing it for the past thousand years, and in not one single instance has there been decided growth, whilst in some the deterioration has been great.

Contrast all this with the marvellous advance of every state during the last two hundred years in which the principles of our sublime faith have had free play.

Again, these religions are, for the most part, associated with CRUEL AND BRUTALISING CUSTOMS.

Allusion has already been made to the slavery, polygamy, and female degradation of all Mahomedan states. Slavery, polygamy, witchcraft, sorcery, and religious rites which inflame and brutalise the worshippers, distinguish most African races. The infanticide, cannibalism, human sacrifices, and barbarous worship of some of the Polynesian tribes are well known. The customs of India have been alluded to; but to these may be added the witchcraft and sorcery of the Hill tribes, the Meriah sacrifices of some districts, the devil dances of Southern India, the caste usages of all Hindus, and the license, brutality, and cruelty identified with the worship of the more popular divinities. Most of all these are associated with worship and religion; and in hardly a single instance has the latter protested against such enormities, or initiated any movement for their destruction.

None of these superstitions are identified with a PURE AND BENEVOLENT SYSTEM OF MORALITY.

Most of them consist of vague and terrifying notions, associated with rude and debasing ceremonies, and without the least pretence to an ethical basis or design. Others of them, like Islamism, have some true and admirable laws; but they are neutralized by others of an opposite nature, and by the hard, bitter sentiment they breathe into all the relations of life, and the grossness and sensuality which they associate with the hopes of a future state.

Buddhism has the purest moral code of any false religion; but its characteristic vagueness regarding a supreme being and the future destiny of the soul, as well as the manner in which it leaves all to struggle, without supernatural aid, to work out their own emancipation from the bondage of the flesh, deprives its ethical inculcations of more than half their power.

Hinduism, properly speaking, is not a moral teacher. There are found in its philosophical writings, and the Vedas and Purans, sentiments of the highest virtue; but the religion, as such, claims no moral power and authority, whilst in its general influence it is absolutely demoralizing. This is a grave charge to make against the most ancient religion in the world, which holds sway over one-seventh of our race, but it can too easily be sustained. Neither the present peace nor future well-being of a Hindu depend to any very large extent on his moral goodness; nor does his religion or any of its divinities demand from him the repudiation of vice and the possession of virtue. His worship consists in adoration, profuse ceremonialism, and service which is either degrading, as in the case of the Jogi and Shuniashi, or most painful, as with

the pilgrim and the devotee, or most demoralizing and polluting, as in Tantra and Shakti worship.

The supreme aim of a Hindu is to keep his caste pure. To do this the utmost ceremonial care is essential, but morality and virtue are not. Even his elevation through the successive stages of transmigration depends far more on punctilious observances and rites—not seldom painful and degrading—than on the attainment of virtue and goodness. He may succeed without the latter; without the former, never.

The example of the gods is hostile to all that is pure and elevating. Almost all those popularly worshipped have characters ascribed to them which would be simply disgraceful if belonging to any human being. Brahma, for instance, seduced his own daughter. Vishnu, as Krishna, stole, lied, induced others to lie, and lived in the utmost licentiousness. Indra, the king of the gods—according to the ancient mythology—seduced his own religious teacher's wife. Shiva was inflamed with lust and passion, and was rebuked by his wife Parvati, because he was a drunkard, consorted with prostitutes, and danced naked before a renowned devotee for the purpose of breaking his contemplations. These are but specimens of a long and odious list, which need not, and indeed cannot, for decency's sake, be given. An eminent Missionary writes: "The Hindu system contains enactments calculated to produce an opposite effect to morality. For instance, falsehood is not only permitted, but taught to be meritorious, when thereby a Brahmin may be benefited. The same may be said of suicide, when it takes place in the shape of self-immolation on the funeral pile of a

deceased husband, or under the wheels of Juggernaut's car. Formularies and charms are prescribed for the destruction of enemies, and for accomplishing other infamous purposes. The Purans, which are the class of books most read, and by which the views, feelings, and general character of the people are, for the most part, formed, are full of the grossest allusions. And still these books are chanted and explained in the areas of temples, the court-yards of wealthy individuals, and other public places, to companies of both sexes and all ages, and it is even meritorious to hear them. Much to the same effect may be said of what takes place at the festivals kept in honour of some of the gods; where fathers, sons, and brothers assemble in front of the image, and perform before their own and their neighbours' female relatives, nay, before children, the most lascivious and disgusting gesticulations, accompanying the whole with such indecent songs as in other countries would shock even the most profligate of the land. I have seen such things done even at the holy (?) Puri, by the priests; and heard songs sung of such filthy trash as I could never have imagined to enter into the mind of man; and this done openly, with the high sanction of religion, before crowds chiefly composed of females. It has filled my heart with a disgust and sorrow I cannot describe. Of the same demoralizing character, and shocking to every sense of modesty, are the figures often carved or painted on walls and cars, and the images commonly exhibited at festivals. Numbers of these, as I have repeatedly seen, are so utterly abominable that it is impossible to attempt description."

The effect of all these superstitions on the happiness,

morality, and elevation of their adherents might, alike by argument and testimony from numerous sources, be shown to be most disastrous. “The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty”—“Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god”—are inspired sayings, as true to day as they were in the dim, long past, when first they were written; just because alienation from God must inevitably lead away from all that is divine, pure, elevating, peaceful, and good. Human nature has nothing to save it from a downward tendency when it forsakes God. Its own propensities are toward evil, and these are actually stimulated rather than checked by idolatry and false religion. Who can conceive or describe the utter falseness, the ignorance, the selfishness, and the hopelessness pervading the heathen world?

This condition of things should profoundly affect the philanthropist and the mere man of the world; but how much more the Christian! To be indifferent to so much evil, wrong, misery, and loss, indicates a nature itself most defective; and sad as the contemplation of the state of humanity is, it is, if possible, yet more saddening to know that there are millions who profess to serve God, and to receive the Bible as their guide, and to have through Christ the hope of a better life, who live without the burden of the world's alienation from God pressing heavily on their minds, and who make no habitual effort for its redemption, or take the least interest in what is being attempted for its evangelization. Regarded even simply in an earthly light, superstition is a frightful curse, far more destructive and malign than war, slavery, or disease in all their

forms combined; and it is justifiable and even meritorious to cherish toward it a profound, passionate, and undying hostility. But Christians should especially be influenced by the fact that God is dishonoured and wronged by false religion as He is by nothing else, and that all the souls it enthralls suffer final and irreparable loss. The future condition of the heathen we shall not now discuss; but this much is certain, if Christ be as necessary, as precious, as much to man in his relations to sin, to eternal life, and to God, as we usually profess to believe He is, then the condition of those who are ignorant of His name and of His gospel, is alike to be pitied and deprecated, and should lead, on the part of all His followers, to the most strenuous and sustained endeavours to impart to others the glad tidings which God has communicated to them. Nor can they refrain from this without incurring great personal loss and guilt.

CHAPTER II.

THE SPECIAL RELATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH TO THE WORLD.

The Relation Explained.—The Church Designed for Expansion.—No Peculiar Difficulties.—Controversial Questions.—The Missionary Question of Paramount Importance.—Statement of the Question.—Main Cause of Apathy.—Spirit of the Church.—Feelings of the most Devoted Christians.—Variety of Conditions showing the Duty of all.—Advantages of the Missionary Work to the Church: prosperity; harmony; elevation of character; the Spirit's influence; glory of the Church.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST is now, as we have seen, but a portion of the inhabitants of our world. Possessing much in common with other men individually considered, the members of the great spiritual community sustain, in their collective capacity, a SPECIAL RELATION TO THE REST OF MANKIND. To understand that relation is a matter of no small moment. With this view, it may be of service to contrast the general condition of mankind with the character of those who composed the Christian Church when the gospel was introduced, marking, at the same time, the position of the Church as developing her special relation to the world. The grand distinction between the Jews and the other nations is familiar to the readers of the New Testament. The *principle* of this distinction is to be found in the fact that the Jews were taught by reve-

lation the worship of the true God, whilst the other kindreds of the earth, having left the scenes of early revelation and wandered in the darkness of their own vanities, knew not the true God, but worshipped idols. To the Jews, consequently, as knowing and worshipping the true God, the gospel was sent. They were the witnesses of the facts on which the gospel is founded: amongst them were its first disciples, and its first preachers. All the Jews did not believe the gospel: the greater part of them rejected it, persecuting its professors, and doing their utmost to prevent its propagation. They allied themselves to the world, in opposition to the Church; placed themselves as obstacles to the spreading of that truth which had been proved, by the ancient writings and by *uncontested* miracles, to be the consummation of their own religious system; and thus they brought upon themselves the signal vengeance of heaven.

The Jewish polity being broken up, the infidelity and superstition of that people became integral parts of the dread mass of evil against which the energies of the Church were to be directed. The world was spread out before her view, a vast and variegated landscape of ignorance, superstition, idolatry, impiety, and crime! Ages had demonstrated the inefficiency of all the resources of man to preserve him from these evils, or to work his deliverance from them, when he became their victim. Whatever mystery there may be in the long continuance of so much wretchedness combined with weakness and with guilt, one thing is clear:—that what primary tradition had not done,—what human reason, aided by the lights of experience and philosophy, of

genius and civilization could not do,—God himself resolved to do, in the spreading of His gospel by the agency of the Church.

The position of the Church, entrusted with this agency was this: *it was a feeble minority of converted men in exclusive possession of the truth for the benefit of the world.* The doctrines communicated to the Church were the truths of inspiration; the discipline maintained by the Church was the submission of its members to the “mind of Christ;” the inculcation of those doctrines and the preservation of that discipline were not intended, like the Jewish system, as the symbols of a circumscribed community, but as the means by which an active body, proceeding under the guidance and protection of the Universal Father, was to be kept awake to the end of its existence—the instruction and conversion of the world. Every thing in the constitution of the Christian Church will convince a thoughtful inquirer that it is a constitution intended for *expansion*. Let the expansion stop at any point short of universality, and from that point will be seen to arise the symptoms of decay, the presages of death.

There is nothing in the present aspect of the world unfriendly to the expansive operations of the Church, that did not exist, in greater power, more active hostility, and wider extent, at the commencement of the Christian era. There were, moreover, at that time, numerous and potent obstacles that have long since melted away. And there are now, on the contrary, combinations of agencies and circumstances for facilitating the work of the Church, such as never existed

at any former period. Still the world displays the same broad field of operation, and still the position of the Church towards it, in her essential character, and with her improved advantages, is the same as at the first.

Long have questions been agitated respecting the precise forms of creed and polity for which the customs of antiquity and the sanction of inspiration can be claimed; and, in all human probability, the time is yet far distant when the contending parties shall agree to leave these questions at rest. There is one question more nearly allied, perhaps, to *their* solution than has been usually suspected:—What was the constitution of the Church in its *aspects towards the world*? In what particulars did that constitution differ from the systems of Pagan idolatry, and from the limited and shadowy institutes of Judaism? What was there in the visible character, the living spirit, of the great Christian corporation, that stamped it as the selected instrument of heaven for the supplanting of error, and the extirpation of idolatry, by the establishment of truth and religion in every part of the world?

This, surely, is a question relating to the Church in ancient times, not less interesting than the judicature of her officers or the confessions of her faith. And since those questions have produced more strife than conviction, is it not a probable case, that, in pursuing them, men have often been neglecting the greater matters for the less, the practical for the speculative, the certain for the dubious; and that when the order shall be reversed—when the chief attention of inquirers shall be directed to the grand practical designs

which the Church was destined to accomplish on the largest scale, they may discover, before they are aware, and in a way of which they have not dreamed, those minuter truths respecting her interior economy which they have been so long disputing to so little purpose?

Let us, now, waive the consideration of the Primitive doctrine: only assuming that it exhibited, in the freshness and freedom of inspiration, the truths designated by common consent in our own day as Evangelical. Let us waive, too, the consideration of the Primitive polity: allowing the adherents of the various forms of evangelical profession to assume for themselves, respectively, it was precisely *that* to which education or conviction or usage may have guided their own attachment. Then, let all parties survey the Church according to their own conceptions of its outward form, and ask this simple question,—What was the end, the ulterior *end on earth*, for the sake of which that form existed; and what was the vital spirit by which it was animated for the attainment of the end?

It will not be doubted that the Church was composed of professedly converted men. Each of these was converted not for his own sake merely, but for the sake of others; and one of the clearest indications of the reality of a man's conversion was his earnest desire for the conversion of others. Any association of men so converted and so evincing their conversion, *must* have been a Missionary association. The spread of the gospel, proved by their own experience to be the designed instrument of human salvation, must have been a constant object of devout anxiety and strenuous effort. To them it must have appeared as the main

purpose of their union. To them it could never have presented itself as, chiefly, an affair of charity and compassion towards their deluded and suffering fellow-creatures, but as the proper business of the Church, a business to which the Church was bound by her allegiance to God, and by her special relation to the world. The gifts of the Church—the prayers of the Church—the officers of the Church—the visible profession of the Church—her baptism—her holy supper—her preaching of the gospel—all these were the tokens and seals of her character as the Evangeliser of the earth. Each believer was a witness for truth against error, for holiness against sin; and the collection of believers constituting the Church was “a cloud of witnesses,” a confederate band brought together by their Celestial Leader to denounce the usurpation of the grand deceiver, to tear away the veil of delusion which he had spread over the face of the nations, and to draw their fellow-men of every rank and climate to the belief of the truth, and to the enjoyment of the common salvation. Such is the true character and the perpetual office of the Church of Christ—“put in trust” with the gospel for the nations, that they may be saved. He who refuses to embrace the gospel for his own salvation, is not only his own enemy and the enemy of the Saviour: he is an alien from the Church, and takes his part in opposition to the best interests of the world. While he who professes to receive the gospel for his own salvation, and yet, from narrow views, from worldly selfishness, or unbelieving timidity, declines to share the efforts of the Church for the salvation of the world, is a stranger to

the sympathies of the body of Christ. Religion is life. Christianity is a religion of *movement*. The CHURCH is A MISSIONARY INSTITUTION.

A most solemn conclusion from the foregoing train of observations here forces itself upon us. The main cause of apathy towards the Missionary work, in immense numbers of professed Christians, is the want of that spiritual religion which alone can truly unite them to the Church of Christ. Alas, how many hear the gospel without believing it, habitually hardening their spirits against the *mercy* which invites them to be saved! The Missionary Enterprise is, in many instances, the strongest test to which their profession can be brought, and when brought to this test they are found wanting. They are not unwilling to attend our worship. They are ready to afford assistance to the poor and ignorant around them. But,—the Missionary Cause,—what is that to them? Their *own* salvation rouses no concern within them; how shall they be anxious for the salvation of the world? They have not submitted to the Redeemer's sceptre; how should they be zealous for the universal triumph of His kingdom? In vain do we urge on *them* that ours is a work on which the lights of prophecy are casting their brightest radiance, and that it is dignified by whatever is awful in a Divine Command or ennobling in the devotion of the Apostles. They are destitute, voluntarily destitute, of the elementary feelings on which such appeals have power. It is like pressing the calls of patriotism on an alien. In severer times they would have shrunk from martyrdom as they now recoil from Missions, and for the same reason: they “are not

of us," and therefore they will neither suffer nor labour *with* us.

It is to the Church, to the collective body of sound and practical believers, that we are to look for co-operation in such a work as this; a work into which the Church alone can enter, for the accomplishment of which she has received her existence and endowments from "the Lord of all," and neglecting which she ceases to be the Church of the living God, loses her light, her energy, her glory,—and expires.

The spirit of the Christian Church is self-devoted obedience. That orderly acquiescence in the purposes of Heaven which is at once the serenity and the bliss of angels, was lost in the apostacy of man: it is restored to the heart of every convert of the gospel, and impels him to dedicate his being to that end for which he has been created and redeemed. Composed of such converts, the Church is summoned to the consecration of all her powers to that work, which, embracing the highest counsels of the Infinite Mind, kindles the flames of ardour, and nerves the effort of exertion, for their completion. Oh, to hear men talk of obedience and devotion, without extending their thoughts to the revealed pleasure of Him whom they are to obey, or to the sublimity and magnitude of that end of which it is the honour and felicity of a redeemed intelligence to be devoted! Obedience is the substituting of the will of God for our own. Devotion is the bringing away of our whole selves from every thing else, that in all things we may be yielded unto God. And shall *that* be called obedience, which puts the erring inclinations of man in the place of the infallible decisions of God?

{ Shall *that* be called devotion which evaporates in dreamy sentiment, or exhausts itself in personal enjoyment, instead of hourly offering up to God, with the intensity of passion and the solemnity of sacrifice, every active principle of our nature?

The Church consists of individuals, and that which is the work of the entire body is the work, in one form or other, of every one belonging to it. As the faith of the Church is the faith of every member, and the salvation of the Church is the salvation of every member, so, also, is her employment. The proper tone of the Church, therefore, in reference to that employment, must be the collective impression resulting from the sense of individual responsibility. Every man is bound to feel himself personally responsible for the performance of the duty of the Church. If no one man feels this, the Church cannot feel it.—*Where* is the conscience of the Church?

Those who have signalised themselves the most illustriously in this, which is the common duty of the whole body, have ever been the most acutely sensible of the deficiency of their own devotion to it. To them it never occurred that they were starting from the *true* level of ordinary Christians and soaring to an elevation of principle, below which they might have gone forward with safety to their last account. Nor do they ever seem to have regarded themselves as having received any commission placing them under a responsibility *specifically* different from that under which all their Christian brethren are hastening to the tribunal. Their simple conviction has avowedly been, that their duty *as Christians* demanded of them the efforts they were

making. Any self-complacent feeling towards those efforts would have been repelled as suggestions from the malignant spirit, or mourned in deep contrition as a sin against their Lord. We may admire what to our dwarfish conceptions of duty do indeed seem to be seraphic specimens of self-devotion; but it is a truth, not less plain than humbling, that they, who *did* what we admire, were conscious, all along, that they had never come up to that devotion which is required from all. They deplored the coldness of a zeal at which we are astonished. They confessed the languor of exertions which almost appal us by their power. Their ideas of the Church of Christ were such that they would have blushed at the thought of making *their* zeal and *their* labours the standard of universal duty. Can we modify the essential and permanent obligations of the whole Church? Are we permitted to choose the walks of obedience we happen to prefer, and leave the rest to others?

It deserves consideration that the very diversity of qualifications, temperaments, and conditions existing in the Church, which may present itself to some minds as an objection, or at least a difficulty, in the way of the views now inculcated, is itself a striking proof that it is the duty of all to be engaged, directly or indirectly, in the Missionary business of the Church. We may apply to this matter, in the most direct form of legitimate and literal application, the language of an apostle:*

“There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation

* See the whole of the twelfth chapter of 1st Corinthians, and Ephesians iv. 7-16.

of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal..... For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.....Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." On one man there comes down a baptism of the Spirit and of fire, and, amid his deep musings, all nature seems to echo a voice speaking to his heart, "*Whom shall I send? who will go?*" The forms of men in a distant region crowd his daily thoughts, haunt his nightly dreams, and beckon him away from friends and family and country, that he may tell them of that eternal life which is his greatest treasure, and of which as heathen they know nothing. To another is committed, as a sacred trust, commanding influence in his own community. Another is invested with office in the Church, with wisdom and learning, with genius and reputation, all bestowed on him under the same responsibility and for the same end. While to millions is given, in larger or smaller proportions, but *to all collectively, in measure equal to the occasion and destined for the same service*, the means of equipping and sustaining those who go forth in the spirit of the Church, to do the work of the Church. If it be right, and a matter of plain Christian duty, for some to dedicate all their talents (as hundreds of British Missionaries, besides men of other countries, have done and are doing still), by what plea of exemption can the rest excuse themselves from the dedication of the talent they are called to occupy, to the same Christian enterprise? Who shall draw the line of duty? Who will reveal the *religious principle* on which the sage keeps back his counsel, the orator his eloquence, the rich man

his wealth, and the poor the savings of his self-denial, from that catholic system of agencies by which the Church is to evangelise the world? It has been written, as by the finger that "scorched the tablet-stone," in Sinai, on many a Christian's conscience—oh that it were so written on every one's,—“I must go myself, or send another, so far as my means, faithfully applied, admit, to preach the gospel to the heathen.”—When will the hour arrive when every man that calls himself a Christian shall open the depths of his soul to the light of the Bible, and ask the oracle that gives responses there, What does “the God of the whole earth” require me to say, to do, to give, as the expression of my sympathy with His Church, the fulfilment of my duty to His world?

THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO THE WORLD is one of deep responsibility. The duty of every member of the Church in this relation is abundantly clear. Is that duty discharged? Is it even considered?

A most imperfect estimate will be formed of the position of the Church here contemplated, if we confine our view to the obligation under which she is placed to the performance of a solemn duty. *All her interests flourish in proportion as she assumes her proper place and acts in her appointed character.* And this is as true of the individual Christian and the local Church as it is of the Church in a nation or in the entire world. It is, confessedly, of incalculable moment, that the Church of Christ should at all times, through all her members, be pervaded with a vivid impression of those primary truths which are essential to her existence. But can human ingenuity devise a scheme for deepening and

spreading that impression equal to the Missionary work? Here we are brought habitually to feel that our nature is in a ruined state; that our salvation must be gratuitous; that we cannot be saved but through the mediation of the Son of God; that the agency of the Divine Spirit is as necessary to the life of the soul as the air we breathe to the life of the body:—these truths are the elementary principles of Christian Missions, at once urging their necessity, inspiring their motives, and stimulating all their efforts. To be occupied, therefore, in the endeavour to bring these truths before the mind of man in every region, is the most effective method of preserving the simplicity and freshness of their impression on ourselves. And is it not likely that when the plain facts and fundamental principles of Christianity are viewed in the same light, and with the same desire for their universal communication, in every portion of the Church, a key may then be discovered to the many controversies by which the Church has been distracted; that an energy will be secretly at work, by which the elements so long severed from each other, as though they had been essentially discordant, shall be harmonised; and the Church shall resemble those celestial luminaries which maintain their perfect form, and keep their proper path, by that simple principle which pours their light along the sky on other worlds?

Another *internal* advantage accruing to the Church from Missionary ideas and projects may be clearly observed in the *variety and attraction imparted to her ordinary services*. The chill of formality gives way before the glow of interest for a world! There is a

positive enrichment of mind. The sympathies of the heart embrace a wider range. Public discourses and private conversations are imbued with an endless diversity of images and associations all subservient to the growth of devout feeling. Christians find that their religion is not only their most serious concern, but that which possesses the liveliest interest, the strongest charm.

The elevation of individual character, that which in the aggregate makes the character of the Church, is another felicitous result of the Missionary spirit. The thoughts are conversant with the loftiest themes and the grandest hopes. The principles are regulated by the sublimest standard: while the imagination and the feelings are regaled with those high aspirations which raise the man above what is mean and transient, and associate him, in his plans and operations, with holy men and holier angels, and even with God Himself!

Let us not forget how dependent the Church must ever be for her illumination and her sanctity on the free bestowments of the Spirit's influence. That influence is assuredly vouchsafed to the Church most copiously when she is most devoutly and actively urging all her means and opportunities to diffuse the truths and institutions of the gospel through the world. Then the need of such influence is most really felt, and its communication most fervently implored. Then it is that, in answer to the united cry of the whole body of the faithful to the Lord God of Sabaoth, the heavens are opened, and showers of life and peace come down. The Church is blessed herself that she may become a blessing to the world.

Never shall we see the unity and spiritual grandeur of the Church, until, instead of looking only within, she looks, also, abroad,—looks abroad in the consciousness of her responsibility, and with hearty, combined, strenuous effort labours to acquit herself as the Representative on earth of that Saviour, who appears as *her* Representative on high. Then, *then* shall “the nations” behold her glory! *Then* shall the benignant spirits of the skies admire her order and her beauty! *Then* shall the demons of darkness, who have so long usurped a foul dominion over the mind and destinies of man, retreat from their strongest holds, and vanish before her rising splendour!

CHAPTER III.

THE WARRANT OF THE CHURCH FOR MISSIONARY UNDERTAKINGS.

Right of the Church founded on the Dominion of the Saviour.—Asserted in the Commission of the Disciples.—The Command to Preach the Gospel given to them as Disciples.—Not fulfilled by the Apostles.—They appointed others.—The Command obeyed, and the Promise fulfilled, in the various efforts of the Church.—Moral Obligation.—Self-dedication.—Activity.—Consecration of Property.—Idolatry at Home supporting Idolatry Abroad.

THERE are two considerations practically connected with the views we have been taking of the mission of the Church: the right by which the Church assumes to herself the office of evangelising the world; and the kinds and degrees of labour to which she is called in the exercise of that right: for we consider a right as implying duty, and a warrant as involving responsibility.

The undertaking of the Church is, in fact, grounded on the claim of the Saviour to universal homage, superinduced on the original and eternal right of the Supreme Jehovah to be worshipped and acknowledged by His creatures. The immutable obligation of all men to worship God lies at the basis of all religion and morality. The breaking of this bond gives idolatry its real character, doing dishonour to the Creator by changing His glory into a lie. The fact that idolatry

is widely spread and has continued long, cannot in the slightest degree alter our view of the demands of the true God, unless we entertain the absurdity of supposing that a great moral evil loses its nature by the extent to which it reaches, and the time through which it endures!

Equally binding with the obligation to serve God, is the obligation to bring back to His service those who have departed from it. The idea of *numbers* has no relation to the idea of obligation, in this case. Suppose only two persons in the world, both under equal obligation to love and worship God their common Father; *one* forsakes His altar, abandons His ways; is it not clearly binding on the other to try to bring him back? But let the one be multiplied by millions; each of those millions is in the same position, and the duty of the unfallen one to attempt his restoration is the same, as though he alone were guilty. Neither has the idea of *time* any relation to the idea of this obligation. Let it be the duty of Abel to seek the conversion of Cain in the first hour of Cain's apostacy: no succession of hours, accumulating into years or centuries, could possibly annul the duty binding at the first. Nor, in truth, has the idea of *place* any relation to this idea of obligation;—*wherever* the wanderer is, the faithful must call, invite, persuade him to return.

The right of the Divine Saviour to universal homage as "Lord of all" in virtue of his Mediatorial exaltation, has been superinduced on the original right of the Creator to the worship of His offspring. This important principle of the Christian Theology is interwoven with all its facts and discoveries. The advent

of the Messiah, resulting from eternal counsels, for substantiating the types and accomplishing the chief predictions of all previous ages, was hailed by celestial witnesses as bringing "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!" Then arose upon the world that meridian light whose morning beam had pierced the darkness of four thousand years. Then was seen the mystery concealed within the shadows of the Jewish System—a Saviour for the World! Then was exhibited the mighty power of God in that nature which Satan had seduced, which sin had ruined. Then was achieved the victory of holiness over sin, and the triumph of immortality over death. *Man* obeyed, suffered, foiled the Tempter, bowed his head, and died! And *Man* was raised from the grave, exalted to the heavens, and seated at the right hand of God. "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was *manifest in the flesh*, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory!"*

Now what is the peculiar glory of that estate to which the Incarnate Word has been exalted? Is it not that His dominion may be supreme and universal—that all the hosts of the saved may adore Him, and that all the nations of the earth may own Him as their Lord, to the glory of God the Father? He has a right, therefore, secured by His Father's promise, and grounded on His own obedience and sacrifice, to issue the mandate, and to employ the means of universal conquest: for to Him every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess; to Him

shall be given "the Heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession." In His name that possession is to be asked, in prayer to God. In His name that possession is to be rescued from the usurpation of Satan, and from the reluctance of man.

He asserted this right when, His work on earth being finished, He was about to ascend His throne. "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, "ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST; TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU: AND, LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD."*

Here, then, is the Divine Warrant,—the command in which the Church reads her duty to her Lord, in her appointed relation to the whole world. Here, too, she reads her encouragement to prosecute the duty fully, to the utmost verge of her allotted sphere.

However vaguely this command may have been quoted in application to general efforts for the diffusion of the gospel, nothing can be more groundless in argument as well as mischievous in tendency (as keeping Christians from their duty), than the notion that would confine it exclusively to the Apostles,—regarding it as exhausted, so to speak, in their peculiar commission. Let the following observations be weighed.

* Matt. xxviii. 16-20.

1. Admitting that this command was addressed to the Apostles only, it must be noticed that they are spoken of as *disciples*. Being themselves disciples they are commanded to *disciple* all nations. They are enjoined to teach all nations to observe all things which He had commanded them, the command just given being of course included. Having thus provided a succession of teachers through all the ages of the Church, He gives a promise running parallel with the command along those ages—"even unto the end of the world." The principle of this commission must commend itself to every unsophisticated mind as being plainly this:—The *disciples* of Jesus Christ are to observe whatever He has commanded, and to teach all nations what they have learnt themselves. The manner in which this is to be done may afterwards appear. It is with the principle of *discipleship involving the obligation to teach* that we are now concerned.

2. The command of Christ was not obeyed, nor the fulfilment of the promise experienced, in their full extent by these eleven apostles. They did not visit all nations. Christ has not been with them, personally, to the end of the world. Their services were limited by time and space. They went to their rest. Can any man imagine, on the one hand, that the Omniscient Saviour would give so comprehensive a commission to men under a physical impossibility of performing it; or, on the other hand, that the Apostles *failed* in the accomplishment of that which He designed them to perform?

3. Whatever the extent of the apostolic labours might be, or however long or short their continuance, it is quite apparent on the surface of the New Testament

that they—the Apostles—did not discharge the duty enjoined, nor partake the blessings promised, exclusively, in their own life-time. They appointed or encouraged other *disciples* to co-operate with them in this service ; and to those other disciples, as well as to their apostolic leaders, was the presence of Christ vouchsafed, according to His promise.

4. The same command has been obeyed in successful reliance on the same promise, by multitudes, of various classes, since the death of the Apostles. Witness, for example, the ordinary labours of the public ministry of the gospel, by which, in every age, and among all denominations of Christians, sinners have been converted from the error of their way, and conducted along the path of holiness to heaven ; and the humble consecration of talent in the more private walks of life, by prayer, by conversation, by circulating books and tracts, by the instruction of children or adults, and by the various aid rendered to institutions for carrying on such objects on an extended scale. Witness, too, the signal proofs of divine favour resting on the self-devotion of Missionaries going forth from different lands, and turning the heathen from their darkness to the light of Truth. In all these instances the command has been obeyed, the promise has been fulfilled. The Church has discharged her original and permanent commission, and her Lord has blessed her in the deed. The Missionary engagements of the Church stand, therefore, on the broad and simple basis of moral obligation, and are urged by the solemnities of Conscience and Responsibility. The Command and Promise of her Lord constitute her right and her encouragement to prosecute these engagements.

5. That the Apostles themselves understood our Lord's words in this sense is obvious from their subsequent lives. St. Mark, in the closing verse of his gospel, after he had been writing of the Saviour's last commands to His disciples, adds, "And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following." We have but to turn to the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles for the amplest illustrations of the manner in which they understood the will of Christ and obeyed it.

The next consideration is—What kinds and degrees of labour are demanded in fulfilment of the obligation resting on the Church ?

The nature of the Christian religion implies that God has an inherent and inalienable right to the entire surrender of our being ; and that the doctrines and privileges of Christianity, so far from interfering with that right, press it home by motives of most tender and constraining interest. The belief of the Gospel, and the peace and confidence which come along with that belief into the soul, can never relax our obligations, but must confirm them, while they strengthen their appeal by awakening our gratitude and drawing our hearts, at the same moment in which they touch our consciences and our fears. This surrender of being, in which personal Christianity consists, although the result of Divine Influence, is as spontaneous as all the other acts of a free and intelligent spirit. The heart yields to the guidance of Him who is infinitely true and wise ; to the mercy of that offended Father who has Himself provided the atonement for sin ; to

the authority of that Supreme Governor, who, while He stoops from His throne to embrace the penitent believer, has never left His throne, never broken the sceptre of His Majesty nor abrogated the sanctions of His will. By this surrender we become embodied with the Church, share her privileges, and participate in her responsibility. The charge committed to the Church is THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE WORLD. To each member of the Church, then, this is an object to which he must regard himself as dedicated. It is required of the whole Church of God (and, therefore, of each member in particular) that whatever peculiarly concerns the honour of God our Saviour should excite a lively interest. To every Christian it must be a matter of high consideration, that his fellow-men should know his Lord, should love Him, and be saved by Him. These are objects to which our thoughts should flow as in their natural current. Our hearts should come forth to meet them and give them welcome. We should feel towards them the fidelity of servants and the warmth of partisans. Our position in the world requires that to these objects our active energies both of mind and body should be devoted. True it is that God does not require what we *cannot* do; but what we can, He *does* require. He has appointed a work to be done. He has commanded His Church to do that work. He gives the inclination to do it. He gives the ability to do it. He gives the opportunity to do it. Let each do what he can, and ALL he can, and the work will be accomplished.

The simple principle of dedication to God, which glows with living fire in the language of the Scriptures

and in the examples of the saints, and which is, in truth, the spirit of the Christian Church, involves all that can be desired or done in the great work before us. Let a man imbibe this principle, and we would say to him:—Follow it out:—Act upon it:—Try what you can do:—Do it faithfully, devoutly, honestly:—Do it with all your heart:—Do it *now*:—Do it always:—Do it in the best way you can. You may have little time to dedicate:—Remember you *owe* that little time to the work. You may have little strength of body:—that also you owe. You may have slender talents:—they belong to God. Your influence may be feeble and limited:—such as it is you have no right to keep it back. You can converse with your children, or your servants, or ignorant neighbours, winning their confidence by the example of your cheerful and consistent piety. You can invite your friends and acquaintance to accompany you to the house of God. You can give a tract, or lend a book; and these you can read to such as are unable or unwilling to read themselves. You can engage your services, statedly or occasionally, in a Sabbath School—one of the simplest and most effective spheres of usefulness on which it is possible to enter. You can be *ready* with your hearty advice and encouragement to others who are thus employed.

The consecration of PROPERTY to this service is a very simple question as to the principle; though one of great delicacy and difficulty in many of its specific applications.

It is a trite yet most important truth, that all the property in the world belongs to God; and that its earthly possessors are responsible to Him, as His

stewards, for its faithful appropriation. On this principle it would be easy to argue the duty of men, *as men*, to consult the will of God and to aim at His glory in the distribution of all the property committed to their charge. But let us take narrower ground. We are arguing not with men merely, but with *Christian men*, converted men—the men who constitute the Church of Christ. With such men it ought to be a first principle that they themselves belong to God in a high and peculiar sense, as redeemed by His grace, and given up in voluntary dedication to His service:—most assuredly the Church is the “purchased possession” of the Lord of the Church. The property of the Church, that is, all the property of every member of the Church, is His. No man, therefore, acts on Christian principles, who has not offered His all in sacrifice to God his Saviour.

It is most true that man is not accountable to his fellow-man, beyond the claims of honesty and justice, for the use he makes of his property: the Supreme Disposer has left this to the conscience and discretion of each individual. But this discretion involves responsibility to Him who has given it. There must, of course, be a wise discriminating of particular applications; but on what principle will a Christian withhold the contribution of his property from *every* application made to him, under the direction of Divine Providence, on behalf of the illumination of the world?

Only let the Christian Church be thoroughly convinced that the universal spread of the gospel is an end that *must*, by Christian means, be accomplished; and let the Church be at the same time trained to the

recognition of right principles in regulating the distribution of property;—and most of the practical difficulties which beset the question, and actually hinder the work, will disappear. When *men* (to say nothing of Christians) set their hearts on an object, see how they act! How large their sacrifices! How lavish their expenditure! How admirable their contrivances! How effective their conduct! And oh! how long, how much longer, shall men thus demonstrate their earnestness under the urgencies of a transient want—in the indulgences of passion—often in pursuits that conscience must condemn—always in the gratification of tastes that are idle and frivolous in comparison with the spiritual interests of a world; while Christians will not give the same demonstration of their earnestness to save their brethren from the second death?

It is delusive to assure ourselves of the judgments and hearts of Christians, while their silver and their gold are “kept back.” *Idolatry at home* is the mightiest auxiliary to idolatry, in its less subtle though more palpable forms, abroad. Here then, within the temple of the Church itself, idolatry must be assailed—exposed—condemned; till every worshipper shall truly act on the impulse of that stanza in the touching record of Cowper’s mournful self-reproaches:—

“The dearest idol I have known,
Whate’er that idol be;
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,
And worship only Thee.”

CHAPTER IV.

MISSIONARY EFFORTS OF THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS.

Proofs that the Primitive Christians were a Missionary People.—The Difficulties they encountered.—Habits of the Nations.—Power of the Roman Empire.—Difficulty of access to Remote Places.—Small Number and Feeble Resources of Christians.—Error respecting Miracles.—Extent of the Labours of the First Christians.—Testimonies of Tacitus: Pliny: Justin Martyr: Tertullian: Clemens Alexandrinus.—The Nature of the Doctrines Preached.—The kind of Agency Employed.—No Organised Missionary Societies.—Why?—Voluntary Activity of Individuals and of Churches in their Social Capacity.—Illustrations from the New Testament.—Spirit of the Early Missions.

THAT the Primitive Christians were a Missionary people might be fairly presumed from the principles which formed the basis of their union; from the circumstances in which they became acquainted with the gospel, and the sufferings they patiently endured for its sake; from the spirit of charity which animated their intercourse with one another and with the world; and more especially *from the astonishing progress made by the gospel in their day through various regions of the earth.* To the last of these facts our attention is now directed.

To see this fact with sufficient clearness and impression, it will be necessary to bring into one view the difficulties which the Primitive Christians had to encounter in the propagation of the gospel, the extent and rapidity of that propagation, the means by which it was secured, and the spirit in which they were employed.

Of the difficulties encountered by the Primitive Missions, some, and the chief, were those which exist always and everywhere—the depravity of the human heart opposing itself to the doctrines and precepts of the gospel—and the agency of Satan, adding subtlety and strength to that depravity. To these we may add, the impediments arising from prejudices created by particular systems of thought; the interests of large and influential bodies of men; the deeply-rooted habits of education; the hold maintained by the mythology of Paganism on the imaginations and passions of mankind, pervading their domestic customs and national institutions, their festivals, their business, and their language. These difficulties, though not peculiar to the primitive age, seemed to form an impregnable barrier, and to present the enterprise to which the Christians of that age were summoned, as one, in human estimation, altogether hopeless. At no period of time, and in no part of the world, were the ordinary obstructions to the progress of the gospel so numerous or so great as in the Roman Empire at the commencement of the Christian history. The following passage, though designed by the writer for a very different purpose, contains so vivid a picture of these difficulties, that we may safely leave the impression of the whole to neutralise the sarcastic insinuations mingled with it.

“But the belief of the Christian was accompanied with horror. The most trifling mark of respect for the national worship he considered as a direct homage yielded to the demon, and as an act of rebellion against the majesty of God. In consequence of this opinion,

it was the first but arduous duty of a Christian to preserve himself pure, and undefiled by the practice of idolatry. The religion of the nations was not merely a speculative doctrine professed in the schools or preached in the temples. The innumerable deities and rites of polytheism were closely interwoven with every circumstance of business or pleasure, of public or of private life; and it seemed impossible to escape the observance of them, without, at the same time, renouncing the commerce of mankind, and all the offices and amusements of society. The important transactions of peace and war were prepared or concluded by solemn sacrifices, in which the magistrate, the senator, and the soldier, were obliged to preside or to participate. The public spectacles were an essential part of the cheerful devotion of the Pagans, and the gods were supposed to accept, as the most grateful offering, the games that the prince and people celebrated in honour of their peculiar festivals. The Christian, who with pious horror avoided the abomination of the circus or the theatre, found himself encompassed with infernal snares in every convivial entertainment, as often as his friends, invoking the hospitable deities, poured out libations to each other's happiness. When the bride, struggling with well-affected reluctance, was forced in hymeneal pomp over the threshold of her new habitation, or when the sad procession of the dead slowly moved towards the funeral pile,—the Christian, on these interesting occasions, was compelled to desert the persons who were the dearest to him, rather than contract the guilt inherent to these impious ceremonies. Every art and every trade that was in the least con-

cerned in the framing or adorning of idols was polluted by the stain of idolatry.....If we cast our eyes over the numerous remains of antiquity, we shall perceive, that besides the immediate representations of the gods, and the holy instruments of their worship, the elegant forms and agreeable fictions consecrated by the imagination of the Greeks, were introduced as the richest ornaments of the houses, the dress, and the furniture, of the Pagans. Even the arts of music and painting, of eloquence and poetry, flowed from the same impure origin.....Even the common language of Greece and Rome abounded with familiar but impious expressions, which the imprudent Christian might too carelessly utter, or too patiently hear. The dangerous temptations which on every side lurked in ambush to surprise the unguarded believer, assailed him with redoubled violence on the days of solemn festivals. So artfully were they framed and disposed throughout the year, that superstition always wore the appearance of pleasure, and often of virtue. Some of the festivals in the Roman ritual were destined to salute the new calends of January with vows of public and private felicity, to indulge the pious remembrance of the dead and living, to ascertain the inviolable bounds of property, to hail, on the return of Spring, the genial powers of fecundity, to perpetuate the two memorable eras of Rome—the foundation of the city, and that of the republic—and to restore, during the humane license of the Saturnalia, the primitive equality of mankind. Some idea may be conceived of the abhorrence of the Christians for such impious ceremonies, by the scrupulous delicacy which they displayed on a much less alarming

occasion. On days of general festivity, it was the custom of the ancients to adorn their doors with lamps and with branches of laurel, and to crown their heads with a garland of flowers. This innocent and elegant practice might, perhaps, have been tolerated as a mere civil institution. But it most unluckily happened that the doors were under the protection of the household gods, that the laurel was sacred to the lover of Daphne, and that garlands of flowers, though frequently worn as a symbol either of joy or mourning, had been dedicated in their first origin to the service of superstition. The trembling Christians, who were persuaded in this instance to comply with the fashion of their country, and the commands of the magistrate, laboured under the most gloomy apprehensions, from the reproaches of their own conscience, the censures of the Church, and the denunciations of Divine vengeance. Such was the anxious diligence which was required to guard the chastity of the gospel from the infectious breath of idolatry.”*

We must remember that in the age of which we are treating, there were also difficulties of a most formidable nature peculiar to itself. There was arrayed against the proceedings of Christians *all the authority of the Roman empire*. Taking the most moderated view that even scepticism allows, of the persecutions of the Church by the Roman power, it will be confessed that men exposed to so much danger, for the peaceable observance of a proscribed religion, were placed in circumstances singularly disadvantageous for the propagation of that religion. If the Roman princes inflicted on

* Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," chap. xv.

them "severe punishment" for having "chosen for themselves a singular but inoffensive mode of faith and worship;" if "about fourscore years after the death of Christ, His innocent disciples were punished with death by the sentence of a proconsul of the most amiable and philosophic character, and according to the laws of an emperor distinguished by the wisdom and justice of his general administration;"—then, surely, whatever religious efforts were made by men so situated, *must* have been made at hazards of which we can form only a slight conception. To profess the gospel was to provoke the jealousy of the established priesthood, to denounce the prevailing systems of philosophy, to arraign the profligacy of the camp, the city, the palace, and alternately to excite the contempt or alarm the fears of the masters of the world. To persevere in such a profession, when forbidden, was obstinacy for which no chastisement was considered too severe. In what light, then, could the same authorities regard any movements that proceeded on the principle that this religion was destined to be universal, and on the conviction that it was the duty of every disciple to do his utmost that it might become so? Imperial vigilance might slumber, but it awoke with glances that would kindle persecution in the obscurest hamlet. Keen as the conflict of the servants of truth must ever be with a compact and interested hierarchy, and with the clamours of a superstitious and licentious multitude, how terribly is the danger of the conflict aggravated by the authority of the magistrate and the resentment of the prince! Yet, it is not the danger we are now considering, so much as the peculiar nature of the

difficulty thus placed in the way of spreading the gospel. It had a positive tendency to prevent any effort for that purpose being made ; and when there were spirits bold enough to make them in the face of such opposition, it had an equally direct tendency to prevent their success. For it is to be remembered that the interposition of the secular power, in these cases, was in defence of popular opinions and practices, and for the suppression of a party at first despised for the insignificance of its pretensions, and then hated for the inflexibility of its religious notions and the severity and pureness of its morals.

The spread of the gospel by the Primitive Christians would, of necessity, be greatly impeded by *the difficulty of intercourse with distant parts of the world*, and the constant sacrifices of enjoyment, ease, and safety, with which enterprises for such a purpose must have been carried on. We know too little of these enterprises to be able to furnish a detail of the struggles through which they passed. An inspired Missionary has, indeed, spoken not only of his stripes, prison, deaths, but also of his journeyings, perils of water, perils of robbers, perils by the heathen, perils in the city, perils in the wilderness, weariness, painfulness, watchings, hunger and thirst, fastings, cold and nakedness.* Still the fact that these efforts *were* made at all in the circumstances of the primitive times, is enough to assure us that the full amount of difficulty arising from the causes we have specified must have been experienced.

The smallness of their numbers and the feebleness of their

* 2 Cor. xi. 23.

resources would make these difficulties more appalling. To a hundred and twenty persons in a remote, despised, and suspected eastern province was the commission given to evangelise the world; and of these, some were women, and the greater part were poor and unlearned. Such was the original extent of the Missionary Church, and such were its visible means of encountering alike the power of Rome and the genius of Greece, the refinements of luxury or the grossness of barbarism, in every nation under heaven! Christians in modern times are apt to overlook these difficulties, and to think they were miraculously prevented or miraculously overcome. They forget that *there is no record of such miracles*. They forget the hunger and thirst, the weariness, the shipwreck, the fears and perplexities and sinkings of heart, which beset the Missionaries of the infant Church. They forget the touching allusions in the narratives or letters of those Missionaries to the privations they endured, and to the sympathy with them expressed by their Christian brethren, in the tenderness of their prayers and the cheerfulness with which they aided them. They forget that whatever miracles were wrought by the first Missionaries of the Cross, were for the attestation of the doctrine, *not* for the safety of the teacher; and that they were often wrought for the relief of others, scarcely ever for their own.

The advantages connected with miraculous powers have been egregiously misunderstood. They were proofs of the divinity of the Christian religion appealing to men's senses, securing their attention and shaking their prejudices: thus placing the Christian teacher in the most favourable condition for the delivery of his

message. The possession of such powers would, of course, elevate their faith and courage in a very high degree, urging them to encounter opposition, and sustaining them amidst discouragement. But in gaining access to mankind, in pressing through the hindrances to such access, which would have obstructed the progress of persons in ordinary circumstances, the gifted preachers of the primitive age seem to have been left to the same means and appliances as other men. Miracles were of infinite service *in* the exercise of their ministry; but, *in order to the exercise of their ministry*, it was necessary that they should make every sacrifice of personal comfort and interest, exposing themselves to every kind of hardship, braving the tempests of the deep, the powers of the magistracy, the rage of infuriated mobs, superstitions which no miracles could dislodge, and malice which no virtues could appease.

On the whole, the difficulties attending the propagation of the truth by the Primitive Christians were such as no combination of human wisdom and heroism could surmount. The historian of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" has, indeed, attempted, as is well known, to account for the spread of the gospel in the first age by assigning what he calls the "secondary causes of the rapid growth of the Christian Church." "While," says Mr. Gibbon, "that great body (the Roman Empire) was invaded by open violence, or undermined by slow decay, a pure and humble religion gently insinuated itself into the minds of men, grew up in silence and obscurity, derived new vigour from opposition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the Cross on the ruins of the Capitol.....Our curiosity

is naturally prompted to inquire by what means the Christian faith obtained so remarkable a victory over the established religions of the earth. To this inquiry, an *obvious* but *satisfactory* answer may be returned; that it was owing to *the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself*, and to the ruling providence of its Great Author. But as *truth and reason* seldom find so favourable a reception in the world, and as the *wisdom of providence* frequently condescends to use the passions of the human heart, and the general circumstances of mankind, as instruments to execute its purpose; we may still be permitted, though *with becoming submission*, to ask, not indeed what were the *first*, but what were the *secondary causes* of the rapid growth of the Christian Church.”*

An examination of Mr. Gibbon's development of these “secondary causes” has been pursued with great success by several Christian writers. The popular “Apology” of Bishop Watson is highly satisfactory; as is also the less known work of Dr. Chelsum. “Gibbon's Account of Christianity Considered,” by Milner, is worthy of the highest praise. An admirable exposure of Mr. Gibbon's fallacies will be found in Haldane's “Evidences of Christianity;” and Mr. Douglas, of Cavers, has made some very just and acute observations in his work on “Errors Regarding Religion.” The “Inquiry” of Sir David Dalrymple (Lord Hailes), is one of the finest specimens of cool, judicious, masterly reasoning in the English language, and deserves the careful study of all who have been startled by the positions and insinuations of the eloquent historian.

We shall now proceed to consider the actual progress

* Chap. xv.

of the gospel in primitive times, notwithstanding the difficulties, marking the *extent* and *rapidity* which so wonderfully distinguished that progress.

The narrative of Luke in the Book of Acts contains the authenticated statement of the facts on which our views are to be founded. He lived at the time when those facts occurred, and of many of them he was a witness, and perhaps an agent. His work does not profess to be a complete history. It is, obviously, a *selection of examples* of the way in which the gospel was propagated, first among the Jews, and afterwards among the heathen. The whole is composed on a principle the reverse of that which would have guided a writer whose object had been to *make out a case*, or to advance as much as possible the honour of the cause to which he was attached. Hence, many of the lights thrown upon the rapid and extensive multiplication of Christian converts are of a kind which we should call accidental, being involved in facts which are stated with a totally different design. Instances of this must be familiar to every reader of the Acts:—such as the murmuring of the Grecian converts—the death of Herod—the tumults of the Jews—the clamours of the craftsmen at Ephesus, and numerous other cases.

From the narrative of Luke we learn, that for less than two years from the death of Christ, the labours of Christians were chiefly confined to Jerusalem: no record being given of the *probable* efforts of those Jews from various countries who witnessed the amazing scenes, and felt the spiritual powers, of the day of Pentecost. In the single city of Jerusalem, during these two years, the little band of one hundred and

twenty increased by thousands, multitudes being added to the Lord, a great company of the priests and others being obedient to the faith. Being driven by persecutions throughout Palestine, they went everywhere preaching the word. Some of them, extending their travels, afterwards, to Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, carried not only the gospel to their own countrymen, but also that voluntary spirit of Missionary enterprise which was followed by the most magnificent results.*

It was seven years after the ascension of our Lord, when a revelation from heaven removed the prejudices of Peter and the rest of the apostles, against proclaiming the gospel to the heathen. From this time, we trace the labours of Christian preachers in Syria, Pisidia, Cyprus, at Lycaonia, Derbe, Antioch, in Cilicia, and in other parts of Asia, where multitudes were converted and increased in number daily.

The introduction of the gospel into EUROPE deserves special attention.

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus was one of the most splendid triumphs of the Redeemer's grace, and was effected in a manner which marked him as destined to accomplish the most extraordinary purposes in the extension of the Church, at a time when the other apostles were still lingering at Jerusalem. His boldness in preaching at Jerusalem provoked a conspiracy against his life, so that the brethren, anxious for his safety, had him conveyed to Tarsus.† Not long after, we find him preaching with great success for a whole year at Antioch. From thence, having

* Acts ii. 8.

† Acts ix.

Barnabas for his companion, he visited Jerusalem again, bearing the contributions of the Syrian believers for the relief of their suffering fellow-Christians in Judea. Returning from this journey of benevolence, he and his companion were appointed by the solemn designation of the Holy Spirit, *on a Mission to the heathen*, being recommended by their brethren to the grace of God. This Mission, which we may suppose to have occupied two years, extended to Seleucia, Cyprus, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Galatia, Phrygia. On their return, they gathered the church together and rehearsed all that God had done by them, and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. It is calculated that two years had elapsed, when Paul, accompanied by Silas, undertook a *second* Mission, being again recommended to the grace of God. The primary object of this Mission, in the mind of Paul, was to visit the churches planted on his former journey. This being accomplished, he and his companion would have extended their travels in *Asia*, but were twice forbidden by the Spirit. They came to Troas. There they were directed by a vision to Macedonia, in *Europe*. The ministry of the gospel, in this quarter of the globe, commenced in much trouble, but with great success. Passing from Philippi through Berea, Thessalonica, Athens, Paul went forward to Corinth, where he continued eighteen months, aided in his labours by Timothy and Silas, by Aquila and Priscilla. From thence he went to Ephesus, and then returned to Antioch. While tracing these interesting journeys on a map, how delightful it is to realise the full import

of such brief intimations of success as are given in the simple expressions of the historian !

“The institution, which properly began only after its author’s removal from the world, before the end of thirty years had spread itself through Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, almost all the numerous districts of Lesser Asia, through Greece, and the Islands of the Ægean Sea, the sea-coast of Africa, and had extended itself to Rome, and into Italy. At Antioch in Syria, at Joppa, Ephesus, Corinth, Thessalonica, Berea, Iconium, Derbe, Antioch in Pisidia, at Lydda, Saron, the number of converts is intimated by the expressions, ‘a great number,’ ‘great multitudes,’ ‘much people.’ Converts are mentioned, without any designation of their number,* at Tyre, Cæsarea, Troas, Athens, Philippi, Lystra, Damascus. During all this time, Jerusalem continued not only the centre of the Mission, but a principal seat of the religion ; for when St. Paul returned thither at the conclusion of the period of which we are now considering the accounts, the other apostles pointed out to him, as a reason for his compliance with their advice, ‘how many thousand (myriads, ten thousands) there were in that city who believed.’”†

* “Considering the extreme conciseness of many parts of the history, the silence about the number of converts is no proof of their paucity ; for at Philippi, no mention whatever is made of the number, yet St. Paul addressed an epistle to that church. The churches of Galatia, and the affairs of those churches, were considerable enough to be the subject of another letter, and of much of St. Paul’s solicitude ; yet no account is preserved in the history of his success, or even of his preaching, in that country, except the single notice which these words convey : ‘When they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia,.....they assayed to go into Bithynia.’ Acts xvi. 6, 7.”

† Paley’s Evidences. Part ii. chap. 9.

There are several passages in the Epistles containing remarkable intimations of the very great extent to which the gospel had spread within thirty years from the death of Christ. The following are sufficiently striking, and may suggest many others of a similar nature. “Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given unto me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” “Which (gospel) is come unto you, as it is in all the world;.....which was preached to every creature which is under heaven.” “To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.” “Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia. Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place.”*

* Rom. xv. 15-19; Col. i. 6, 23; 1 Pet. i. 1; 2 Cor. ii. 12-14.

The bitter hostility with which the apostles were encountered, both by Jews and Gentiles, affords conclusive evidence of their success. Had they failed, or but very partially succeeded, they would have been left alone; but in many instances opposition was excited by their growing influence. Thus at Antioch in Pisidia, "the whole city came together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes they were filled with envy."*

One or two familiar extracts from illustrious HEATHEN WRITERS, connected with the representations of the state of religion by the earliest CHRISTIAN ADVOCATES after the apostles, will complete our survey.

TACITUS, referring to the accusation of the Christians by Nero, on the occasion of the burning of Rome, thirty years after the death of our Saviour, speaks of the Christians as holding a "pernicious superstition, which though checked for a while, broke out again and spread not only over Italy, but reached the city also. At first they were only apprehended who confessed themselves of that sect; afterwards a VAST MULTITUDE were discovered by them."†

Fifty years after, the letter of PLINY the Younger to Trajan, respecting the Christians in Bithynia, mentions "the great number of persons who are in danger of suffering; for many of all ages, and of every rank, of both sexes likewise, are accused and will be accused. Nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the open country."‡ The temples are referred to as having been *almost*

* Acts xiii. 44, 45.

† Ann. : Lib. xv. c. 44.

‡ C. Plinius Trajani Imp. : Lib. x. Ep. 97.

forsaken, and the victims for sacrifice, as having few to purchase them. It is important to notice that the provinces in which these things took place were at a great distance from Jerusalem, and that there is no reason for supposing that in these provinces the gospel had been more successful than in other places.

Of the early Christian apologists from whose works it has been usual to gather testimonies on this subject, JUSTIN MARTYR, about thirty years after Pliny, has this remarkable and beautiful passage: "There is not a nation, either of Greek or Barbarian, or of any other name, even of those who wander in tribes and live in tents, amongst whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father and Creator of the universe in the name of the crucified Jesus."*

TERTULLIAN, who addressed his Apology to the Roman emperors about fifty years after the time of Justin, having vindicated the character of the Christians, and shown their loyalty and innocence, proceeds to show that their harmlessness arises not from want of power to revenge themselves. "Are there not multitudes of us in every part of the world? It is true we are but of yesterday, and yet we have filled your towns, cities, islands, castles, boroughs, councils, camps, courts, palaces, senate, forum; — we leave you only your temples. If we were to make a general secession from your dominions, you would be astonished at your solitude."† He also says, in another work, "The Moors and Gætuleans of Africa, the borders of Spain, several nations of France, and parts of Britain inaccessible to the Romans, the Sarmatians, the Daci, Germans, and

* Dial. cum Trypho.

† Apol. : c. 37.

Scythians,"* and other countries, belong to Christ; and "in almost every city we form the greater part." †

CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS, before Tertullian, had spoken of Christianity as "spread through the whole world, in every nation and village and city, both of Greeks and Barbarians, converting both whole houses and separate individuals, even philosophers included." ‡ And ORIGEN, giving the same view of the *extent* of the propagation of the gospel through "a thousand obstacles," speaks of "*innumerable and immense multitudes* having given themselves up to the religion of Christ." §

These facts and testimonies are well known. The principal use made of them, however, has been to regard them as *evidences of the Divine Authority of the Christian Religion*. And, indeed, it has hitherto been found impossible to explain so extraordinary a propagation of *such* a religion, in *such* circumstances, but by admitting (as Paley has demonstrated with inimitable clearness and strength of argument) that the first preachers of the gospel had "means of conviction which we have not, that they had proofs to appeal to, which we want." Another truth, which Paley has omitted, must also be conceded before we can account for the *effects* attending the Primitive ministry: that ministry was accompanied by a DIVINE INFLUENCE on the minds of men, which in later times has been greatly disregarded. But are we to see *nothing more* in the early propagation of the gospel than a confirmation of our faith in the Christian doctrine? Do we not discover most important illustrations of the *nature* of

* Ad. Jud. : c. 37. † Ad. Scap.

‡ Strom. : Lib. vi.

§ Orig. in Cels. : Lib. i. vii.

that doctrine—of its power not only to console but to stimulate, not only to unite but to extend, the body of its disciples. Here are facts, demonstrating to us that it is in the nature of true Christianity to advance and spread: the history of the Church no less than its constitution serves to show the design of its Great Founder, that it should advance and spread, by the agency of its disciples.

Let us examine, according to our materials for judging, the *nature of that agency* and the spirit in which it was exerted.

It is manifest, at once, that there were, at the beginning, no organised institutions resembling those with which exclusively we now associate the idea of Missions to the Heathen. *Then* they were not needed. The whole family of believers composed ONE MISSIONARY CHURCH. Each localised community of Christians was, in its *proper character*, a Missionary institution. Not only were such organised bodies as those we are now acquainted with unnecessary: in the circumstances chosen by the wisdom of God for the commencement of Christian affairs, they might have been fraught with much evil. For when we recollect how soon the simplest offices of the Church were perverted by the designs of ecclesiastical ambition, it is easy to conjecture how much more portentous those designs might have been, had a central and ramified system of Missionary agencies existed. That jealousy, too, which was alarmed by the loneliest efforts of pious zeal, would have been enraged into madness by the show of strength and combination which such a consolidated union would have afforded

to the persecuted Christians. The absence of a formal organisation which would thus have increased the dangers of the Church both from without and from within, is itself a proof of that Divine wisdom by which Christianity was guided, and of the Almighty power by which it was at once protected and diffused. Like the unperceived yet certain processes of nature, the spiritual kingdom arose from feebleness to strength and from obscurity to splendour. The little leaven continued working till a mighty mass was leavened. The precious seeds, sown in secret, sent forth their germs in the depth of many a soil, and at length their stems sprang up with a strength beyond the power of monarchs to extirpate, their branches shadowing the nations that feasted on the fruit.

There are sufficiently numerous examples in the New Testament to aid us in forming a general estimate of the *means* by which the unparalleled success of the gospel, in the primitive period, was accomplished.

The great principle at work was that of *voluntary agency on the part of individuals*: not, indeed, an agency without authority or control, or originating in mere will, but resulting from those holy impressions and convictions that accompany a personal experience of the power of grace. The tone of spiritual feeling was regarded as equally important with soundness of Christian doctrine, and both were inculcated by the example of the apostles as well as by their preaching. The spread of the gospel was as constantly kept in view as its honour, the latter being guarded with trembling vigilance for the sake of the former. On no

other principle can we understand innumerable directions and exhortations addressed to the early disciples, as well as allusions to their state of mind in reference to this matter. They are reminded that they are "the light of the world:" they are commanded to let their light so shine that others may glorify their Father which is in heaven. On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit came down on *all* the disciples. Peter tells the awakened Jews that the promise is unto them, and their children, "and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." On the same day on which those who gladly heard Peter's word were baptised, there were added about three thousand souls: all this growing company sympathised in the labours and sufferings of their leaders, and united with them in prayer: all were filled with the Holy Ghost: all were of one heart and soul: great grace rested on them all: they went everywhere preaching the word, the apostles remaining at Jerusalem. Philip went on a Mission to Samaria, preaching with great success in that city, and afterwards to the Ethiopian treasurer. The Gentiles spake with tongues and magnified God, by the power of the Holy Ghost attending the preaching of Peter to Cornelius and his company. It is surely plain, from these records, that the early Christians *as such* entered into the spirit of that work in which the apostles took the chief direction, and that they laboured *generally*, for the propagation of the faith. The apostles were themselves voluntary labourers, and they enlisted into the same service men, and women too, of kindred spirit. Such was Phœbe; such were Aquila and Priscilla; such were Timothy,

Titus, and Apollos; such were Andronicus and Junia, Urbane, Apelles, Tryphena and Tryphosa, and the beloved Persis, "which laboured much in the Lord." How noble and how instructive are the allusions made by the Apostle of the heathen to "every one that helpeth;" to the "brethren in the Lord, speaking the word without fear;" to "those women which laboured with him in the gospel, with Clement also, and other his fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life;"—to Tychicus, and Epaphras, to Aristarchus, and Mark, to Jesus, surnamed Justus, his "fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, who were a comfort unto him;" to Archippus and Gaius, to Trophimus and Eubulus, and Luke, and many others.* Whatever gifts might enrich these individuals, or whatever offices they might or might not sustain, what endeared them to the apostle was their hearty dedication of themselves to labour as well as suffering for the extension of the gospel. We may be unable to specify, minutely, the nature of these labours, or nicely to adjust the line that separates those of men from those of women, the stated from the occasional, the local from the itinerant, the public and official from the private and unofficial. It is not easy to distinguish such as were guided by special inspiration from those which were tacitly approved as impelled by Christian love, and regulated by Christian wisdom. There is enough to show that the propagation of the gospel was effected by the voluntary active efforts of its disciples, generally, in every place to which it came.

The Primitive Churches, *in their social character*,

* Rom. xvi.; 1 Cor. xvi. 15; Col. iv. 7.

aimed at the extension of the gospel, as a principal end to be accomplished by their mutual faith and charity. An examination of the Acts and of the Epistles, with this particular object in view, would open a wide field of fruitful instruction. We can now refer to only a few distinct instances of what appears to have been a prevailing practice. The first is the church at Jerusalem. We have seen that they went everywhere preaching the word, when they were scattered abroad, on the death of Stephen. When tranquillity was restored, this church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch, to aid the work so happily commenced by some of their own brethren from Cyprus and Cyrene.

The next is the church at Antioch, from which Paul and Barnabas were sent forth on their Mission to the heathen. Then there is the church at Thessalonica. In the first chapter of the first epistle to that church, the apostle makes grateful mention of their "*labour of love*" in connection with the work of faith and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, which knits them as followers of the apostles, causing the work of the Lord to *sound out* in Macedonia and Achaia.

To the Corinthians the same apostle addresses an exhortation, founded on his glorious argument for the resurrection of the saints, to be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour in the Lord shall not be in vain." In a similar strain he addresses the Galatians. He urges the Philippians to "hold forth the word of life," shining as "lights in the world."

The careful reader cannot fail to notice the numerous

indications, scattered throughout the Acts and the Epistles, of the sympathy and aid given by churches and individuals to the apostle in his efforts to spread the gospel among the Gentiles. They sent him forth with their benedictions and prayers; they contributed to his support; they rejoiced in his successes; and not a few persons from among them shared with him in the toils, successes, and honours of his work.

That these labours of the churches continued throughout the first age, and extended beyond their own respective vicinities, is very interestingly proved from the epistle of John to Gaius. The brethren had testified to the church the hospitality of Gaius, when for "his name's sake they had gone forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles." That this was not a singular effort of Missionary zeal is apparent from the apostle's declaration, "We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth;" and that they were authorised by apostolic sanction is manifest from his commending the interest felt in such undertakings as "following that which is good," and his denouncing opposition or indifference to them as "following that which is evil."

These imperfect hints may suffice to show *the decidedly Missionary character of the first churches*, and to account for the ready occurrence of fitting agents for the extension of the gospel through the world. Every supernatural gift and every ordinary endowment, every acquired facility for reaching men's minds, and all the means that wisdom could select, or conscientious piety approve, were employed with willing energy in this great work.

It now remains that we observe the *spirit* in which these voluntary labours were conducted. This is an inquiry of the highest concern, for there is a spirit by which men must be actuated, or they cannot be successfully engaged in the propagation of the gospel. It is possible to provide a large apparatus of means for this end, to direct these means with much wisdom, and to employ vast numbers of persons enriched with every mental and physical quality desired for such a service, and yet the whole may be a melancholy failure, from the simple want of this *proper* spirit.

The peculiarity of the gospel, as distinguished from all other forms of truth, lies in the total dependence of all successful efforts for its propagation on the influence of the Divine Spirit, *given* both to those who teach and to those who are taught. "If there be an explicit truth in Scripture, it is, that the success of the ministry of the gospel, in the conversion of men, is the consequence of divine influence; and if there be a well-ascertained fact in ecclesiastical story, it is, that no great and indisputable results of this kind have been produced but by men who have *acknowledged* this truth, and have gone forth in humble dependence upon that co-operation which is promised in the words, 'And, lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.' This fact, equally striking and notorious, is a strong confirmation that the sense of the sacred oracles on this point was not mistaken by them. The testimony of the word of God is, that, as to ministerial success, 'God giveth the increase;' the testimony of experience is, that no success in producing true conversion has ever taken place in any church, but when this co-

operation of God has been acknowledged and sought by the agents employed in it.

“The doctrine of divine influence, as necessary to the conversion of men, being thus grounded on the evidence of Scripture, and further confirmed by fact, it may follow, and that in perfect conformity with revelation, that such influence may be dispensed in different degrees at different periods. That it was more eminently exerted at the first establishment of Christianity than at some other periods, is certain ; and that not only in extraordinary gifts (for though these might awaken attention and silence unbelief, we have the evidence of Scripture history to prove, that miracles cannot of themselves convert man from vice) but in sanctifying energy, without which the heart is never brought to yield to the authority and will of God in its choice and affections.” *

✓ This divine influence is promised in connection, not with any efforts of any kind that may have the propagation of the gospel for their end, but with efforts made in such a temper of mind as honours both the grace and the power of God in the bestowment. This is the temper of mind which pre-eminently characterised the Missions of the Primitive Age. This, and nothing else, is *the Missionary spirit*. If we may venture to analyse this spirit, we discover in it a firm belief of the great truths of the gospel as the only means of human salvation—a solemn conviction of the duty of making these truths known universally, with a distinct aim at the conversion of mankind—love to the Saviour and to all men for His sake—a humble sense of unworthiness

* Watson's Life of Wesley.

to be engaged in any service, however lowly, directed to so sublime an object — an utter abandonment of selfish aims and gratifications—simple reliance, cherished alike in labour and in prayer, on that divine influence which alone can ensure success—and a cheerful expectation of success in the present state, with a “crown of joy and glory” in the day of Christ. Such was the spirit of the Primitive labourers—such their faith, their convictions, and their love; such their humility and self-denial, their dependence and their hope. We have partly seen the fruits, in the most wonderful revolution of the minds and morals of mankind that time has ever witnessed. The final issue will be announced in the disclosures of the Judgment, and contemplated in the fulness and grandeur of Eternity.

CHAPTER V.

THE PROGRESSIVE DECLINE OF THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT.

Painful Impressions produced by the Study of Ecclesiastical History.—Exceptions.—Declension foretold.—Decline of simple and spiritual Piety.—Speculative Controversies.—Secular Ambition of the Clergy.—Corruptions flowing from Luxury.—The Crusades.

WHEN we treat of the decline of the Missionary spirit, we must be understood as meaning the decline of *that* spirit which we have been tracing as the characteristic of the Church in her earliest and best days.

It is confessed that we cannot turn to any age in the chronicles of what is called THE CHURCH without observing the extension of the system ; and if nothing more than this had been required for preserving the original temperament of the Church, it might be said with truth, that temperament never declined at all. But the reader of Ecclesiastical History, should his mind be braced to the tone of the New Testament, will often feel confounded. As century after century passes before him, picturing on his mind the actual progress of the scenes with their busy actors and ever-shifting events, he cannot but lament the symptoms of degeneracy crowding on him as he advances ; so that with every desire to hope the best, he strives to repress the cold and sickening sadness with which he follows

out the spread of what *ought* to have been the gospel by that which *professed* to be THE CHURCH. Not unfrequently will he surmise, if he be of a candid and liberal disposition, that the work of the true Church was oftener accomplished by men whose memories are branded with the odium of heresy, than by their more powerful calumniators. He will, at least, discover no very striking imitation of the Primitive Mission in the enterprises of ambitious ecclesiastics or conquering princes. He will look with suspicion on conversions taking place without instruction, among nations to whom no other alternative was left than slavery or death. He must see with grief and almost indignation that what was offered to the world for Christianity, through a long and dreary waste of time, was a wretched substitute, agreeing with Christianity in little else besides the name, having nothing of its power to convert the souls and transform the characters of men.

There were exceptions.—It is impossible to survey the memorials of churches planted, or to examine the versions of the Scriptures executed for many of those churches, among the Ethiopians, the Saxons, the Gauls, the Germans, the Britons, and several other nations both in the West and in the East, without believing that these were the works of men whom any age would venerate for sanctity and learning, and who were blessed in the spiritual advancement of the Church of Christ. It is fair to presume, there were many who, whatever errors might cloud their views, or however the observances of religion were blended in their practice with the usages of superstition, were still enlightened by the Divine Spirit in the essentials of

the gospel, and honoured as the instruments of turning sinners to repentance.

We may trace the causes and accompaniments of Missionary declension amidst the general body of professed Christians, in the facts by which history records the existing condition of the Church. Christ and His apostles had foretold that there would be a falling off from the freshness and energy of primitive piety; that this falling off would be occasioned by the various workings of human passions and infirmities; that it would be marked by certain characteristic features; that it would long continue; but that it would be followed by a return to the older and better way, in the remoter ages of the Church.

An acquaintance with human nature, and more especially with its treatment of the Patriarchal and Jewish revelations of religion, ought to have convinced men that a similar deterioration of the Christian institutes was highly probable. The predictions of the New Testament prepared them to expect it. The annals of the Church record it.

The first thing that strikes us in the view of this matter is the early *decline of that simple and spiritual piety which prevailed at the beginning*.—We can scarcely look at even the best remains of the ages next succeeding that of the apostles without lamenting the rapid growth of those seeds, amidst the sowing of which they had shed their tears and uttered their prognostications. Persecution, indeed, by preventing the accessions of the insincere, and compelling Christians to adopt those habits which secured their separation from the world and their union with each other, had

for a while preserved the spirit of the Church in somewhat of its genuine purity and fervour. But the calms that came were treacherous. Outward prosperity was abused. The sunshine of imperial favour relaxed the nerve of ancient principle. The blending of the Church with the world weakened the tone and cooled the ardour of piety. Christianity became diluted. Hence it was that forms, professions, legends, ceremonies, and visible adornments were increasing; and to the worldly eye THE CHURCH was diffusing her power and her splendour, while to the spiritual observer she presented a spectacle of inward poverty, weakness, and contraction! We look in vain for that general consecration of individual talent to the spread of the gospel which cheered us in the review of former times. That ancient respect for the teachers of the Church, courteously accorded for their work's sake, which led to a vigorous co-operation with them, was lost in that servile reverence for official character which would have shuddered at the impiety of trespassing upon their functions. When they were looked upon as lords rather than as brethren, as men whose labours were to be trusted in, not actively and generally aided, the *very principle* on which the gospel was spread at the beginning, the only principle on which we have reason to believe it ever was or ever will be spread, was laid aside. The inevitable result was, that the gospel ceased to be propagated as it had been before. The minds of men were carried still farther away from the proper work of extending the gospel by the eagerness displayed, and the consequent time and power exhausted, *in controversies on points of abstract and speculative opinion*.—Many controversies arose on

questions of the most frivolous nature, and were carried on after the most puerile fashion. The mention of them provokes the laughter of the profane, and ought to excite the sorrow of the saints. Some of them referred to matters infinitely removed from practical interests, and often beyond the grasp of the human intellect. But even granting to these controversies a higher measure of importance, and admitting that they might be carried on at times in a style becoming reasonable men and Christians, we must still advert to them with serious regret, as diverting attention from one great business of paramount and urgent duty—the diffusion of the gospel amongst ignorant nations. They left no inclination for this work, nor leisure: and they produced or cherished that disputations temper which has always proved injurious to the extension of the truth. Oh, how mournfully must the spirit of Christianity have degenerated when the sophisms of the schools, the gladiatorship of dialecticians, the disputes of learned doctors on fourth marriages, on the time of celebrating Easter, on the modes of honouring saints and images, on the use of leavened bread in the Eucharist, on the unfathomable mysteries of predestination, on the immaculate conception of the Virgin, on the manner of the birth of Christ, and on the worshipping of the blood of Christ—when themes like these employed the thought, and absorbed the passions of the Church! Could they not read in the New Testament the words whereby men may be saved? How could they overlook the plain command which bound all Christians to bring the nations to the knowledge of these words?

A *third* symptom of declension is betrayed in the *secular ambition which appeared so soon and has prevailed so long amongst the LEADERS of the CHURCH*. To rule the Church was more tempting than to serve her. Power had more attractions than usefulness. The very institutions whose whole meaning was a constant enforcement of humility, were rendered tributary to pride. How was it possible, when the interests of religion itself were made secondary to the worldly projects of its teachers, that any of those movements could take place which are at once the indications and the stimulants of self-renouncing devotion to the spiritual object, and in which movements the Missionary work consists?

The corruptions following in the train of luxury are additional symptoms of the declension we are tracing. When the professors of Christianity robed themselves in purple, and dwelt in marble palaces amid the pomp of gold, and song, and wine, they could not *afford* the undertakings which the Church of better days sustained in poverty. The spiritual miseries of the world were forgotten in the fulness of earthly indulgence. It is true that an opposite state of things arose, from the tendency of one extreme to produce another. Multitudes, disgusted with the evils of society, or hopeless of tasting its pleasures, repaired to the living tombs of the monastery, or retired to the solitudes of the desert. In each extreme, the proper business of Christians was neglected. In the city the gospel was dishonoured by the profligacy of its professors. In the cell of the hermit, and in the cloister of the monk, it was *hidden* from the world to which it ought to have been preached.

Finally, — *The Crusades* exhibited what could be

effected by the states of Christendom under the garb of religious zeal excited by enthusiasm. The tales of chivalry have given to those guilty enterprises the power of enchantment over our imaginations. No reasoning can now dissolve the spell. But what, at this day, would have been the state of Europe, of Africa, and of Asia, if THE CROSS that blazed in the pride of battle on their banners had been truly apprehended by the men who clothed themselves in steel, and left their household hearths to die around the Holy Sepulchre!

CHAPTER VI.

REVIVAL OF MISSIONARY EFFORT IN THE CHURCH.— NARRATIVE.

Efforts of the Roman Hierarchy.—Religious Orders.—Xavier.—Propaganda.—Queries suggested to Protestants.—The Reformation.—First Protestant Mission.—Swedes.—Dutch.—Pilgrim Fathers.—Early Missionary Projects in England.—Danish Missions.—Moravians.—Missionary Constitution of the Moravian Church.—Wesleyan Missions.—Baptist Missions.—The London Missionary Society.—Missions to the South Seas.—South Africa.—India.—China.—West Indies.—Impressions produced on the Church by the success of Missions.—Scottish Societies.—Church Missionary Society.—American Societies.—Summary of Missionary Societies and Agents.

A REVIEW of Christian Missions would in many quarters be considered incomplete, without noticing the special efforts of the Roman Hierarchy to extend its influence among heathen nations. Any attempt at a fair examination of their proceedings would entangle us, at every step, in the meshes of inextricable controversy. A brief sketch, however, may lay a foundation for a few remarks connected with our present subject.

At all times the power of the Papal Church was exercised for *the enlargement of territory beyond its limits*, as well as for the maintenance of authority within them; and zealous efforts were continually made, sometimes with boasted success, oftener with marked failure, to proselyte the members of other churches existing in

the eastern parts of Europe, and in the contiguous regions of Asia and Africa.

The sixteenth century opened the old world of the East, and the new world of the West, to the Portuguese and Spanish monarchies, most powerful and devout adherents of the Papal system. These tempting realms of ghostly empire presented themselves to the Pontiff at that crisis when some of the mightiest states of Europe were abandoning his jurisdiction, and when even those who adhered to him were learning, from the events of the Reformation, to modify their obedience to a power at whose footstool they had hitherto been blindly prostrate. The Spanish and Portuguese Missionaries followed the tract of their victorious compatriots. The zeal of the Franciscan and Dominican orders was roused by the subtle activity of the Jesuits. The tomb of Xavier in Goa, at which the Eastern pilgrim still offers his devotions, will long perpetuate the memory of the unshrinking firmness, surprising genius, keen penetration, and inextinguishable zeal, with which that extraordinary man established the influence of his ORDER, and the authority of his church, over a portion of the Indian Continent and many of the adjacent islands—never resting till, as with the speed and power of lightning, he had celebrated equal triumphs in the great empire of Japan, and led the way for enterprises of similar magnificence and daring into the heart of China. Obscure efforts were made, during the same period, by Capuchin Friars accompanying the Portuguese settlers on the coast of Africa, to bring the fierce natives of that dark continent under the same dominion. To narrate the history of the Para-

guay Mission were to repeat a tale over which religion weeps, and humanity burns with indignation !

It was not until a century after Xavier's Mission, that the spirit of foreign conquest in the Roman Church acquired a local habitation and a name. A system embracing the largest views, and endowed with the amplest revenues, by the donations of successive Popes and other wealthy persons, was commenced by Gregory the Fifteenth. "The Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith," holding its councils in one of the most sumptuous palaces of the Eternal City, was followed by another institution, founded by a Spanish nobleman residing at the court of Rome, for training Missionaries. France and other countries followed the example ; and the numerous religious fraternities directed their most zealous regards to the same object. The agents of these vast and concentrated schemes of propagation were soon beheld labouring with great assiduity over large tracts of India. Some of them were tolerated and even patronised by the King of Siam, in whose dominions they were not altogether without success. But the most signal achievements of these Roman Missionaries were in Japan and China. In every province of the Celestial Empire they are said to have acquired influence and converts. An edict was issued by the Emperor Chang Hi (whose talents and virtues obtained the highest eulogies), permitting all his subjects who chose to embrace the Christian religion. So auspicious indeed was the policy of this prince, that he ordered a superb and costly church to be built for the Missionaries within the precincts of his palace.

The staunchest Protestant can scarcely survey the

Missions thus hastily glanced at, without hoping, perhaps believing, that many of these agents were moved by sincere obedience to the command of Christ, and that in the labours to which they gave themselves, often encountering peril, and sometimes leading their followers by their own example to die rather than abjure their faith, they were truly accomplishing the proper business of the Christian Church. However waveringly this belief may be held by some of us, we cannot think of those who were engaged in such undertakings without admiring their constancy, their courage, their zeal, and, above all, the simplicity of aim with which they lived and died for one great end. The general features of the *system itself* are, alas, too plain to be misunderstood. The time of its commencement, the means by which it was *avowedly* carried on, the nature of its success, the character of its prime conductors, the principles and usages it propagated, and such monuments of its power as the inquisition at Goa,—these are facts that glare on us too vividly to admit of error. Still, a question of vital seriousness occurs before we pass away from the present contemplation. Did these Missionaries preach the gospel or not? If they *did*, is not their example in so doing binding on Christians of every name? If they did *not* preach the gospel (and this for the greater part is probably the truth), then their conduct presents a double appeal to every Christian; for if they devoted themselves thus to the support of what you denounce as imposture, will you not be at least equally devoted to the service of truth; if they were successful in deceiving their fellow-men, can you be indifferent to their instruction and salvation?

It was natural to suppose that the same mighty causes which produced the Reformation from Popery in Europe, by opening men's minds to the gospel in its original simplicity and power, would gradually lead the churches and nations throwing off the thralldom of the Papacy to that feature of Primitive Christianity which we have considered in the fourth chapter. Nor was it unnatural to expect that this gradual return to the ancient practice might be accompanied with much of the imperfection attendant on the transition from ideas long rooted in the minds of men by the regnant superstition. That Protestants were long before they entered fully and heartily into the great work of propagating the gospel among the heathen, will not be surprising to those who consider how slowly the principles of truth and duty make their way, and who also remember how the leading instruments of the Reformation had to struggle against power, as well as prejudice, in the establishment of their principles at home. For three or four generations they had to contend at several points against force, falsehood, and intolerance for all that they held dear; and thus all their attention was absorbed in a struggle for religious existence. Some of the difficulties with which the earlier Protestants had to grapple, in France, in Bohemia, and afterwards, even under Protestant government, in England, were overruled by the Providence of God to become remarkably subservient to the propagation of the gospel in heathen nations.

It was, chiefly, with a view to an asylum for his Protestant brethren from the persecutions they endured in France, that the Admiral de Coligny used his

influence at the French court for the sending out of a colony to Brazil in 1556. The governor appointed over the colony, himself a Protestant, applied for some divines from Geneva, who, accompanied by a large number of French Protestants, repaired to the new colony in the hope of introducing the gospel to the natives. This FIRST PROTESTANT MISSION to the Western continent was crushed in its commencement. A change occurred in the religious profession of the governor. He became the persecutor of the men who had settled in Brazil by his own earnest invitation. They were driven from the country ; and after suffering the most terrible distresses from the treachery of their persecutor, and the perils of a long and disastrous voyage, the survivors returned to France, after an absence of not more than two years.

In the year after that in which the Swiss Missionaries returned, the renowned GUSTAVUS VASA, King of Sweden, commenced a series of operations, prosecuted with considerable vigour by his successors, for the propagation of the gospel in Lapland. In one year three hundred rix-dollars (about fifty pounds sterling) were contributed by the poor Swedish congregations towards the support of these measures. There are slender materials for judging of the *spirit* in which these Missions were conducted, though there is some reason to fear that the form of godliness was more regarded than its power.

The naval triumphs of THE DUTCH over the Portuguese, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, put them in possession of a splendid empire in the East. Ceylon, Java, Amboyna, Sumatra, and other places in

the Moluccas submitted to their sway. The nominal conversions of the natives in all these places might amount probably to half a million.

But when we examine the means by which these conversions were effected, the general system pursued by the ruling power, and the actual condition of the people when the dominion over them was transferred to the authorities of our own country, we shall see little in these schemes of worldly policy to identify them with the Missionary operations of the Christian Church.

THE PILGRIM FATHERS OF THE AMERICAN STATES were honoured to behold the commencement of a very different work. Banished by power from their English sanctuaries, they sought liberty of thought for themselves and their children in the newly-discovered regions of the West. When the difficulties arising on their first settlement were in some measure overcome, their Christian anxieties were drawn to the heathen natives of their adopted home. The labours of Eliot, "the apostle of the Indians," of the Mayhews, of Serjeant, of the great Jonathan Edwards, and of the self-denying Brainerd, furnish a story of Missionary trials, perseverance, and success, fraught with lessons of the deepest instruction and excitement to the whole Christian Church. To British and American Churches they have a special interest.

IN ENGLAND more attention was given, previous to the close of the eighteenth century, to the state of the heathen than is usually supposed. As early as 1578 there accompanied the great sailor Frobisher to Greenland, a minister of good repute, named Wollfall, "for the only care he had to save souls, and to reform those

infidels, if it were possible, to Christianity." Among the many noble designs of Cromwell was one for the purpose of supporting and extending the Protestant faith in foreign countries.*

Alleine, the author of "*An Alarm to the Unconverted*," when ejected from Taunton by the Act of Uniformity in 1662, and no longer permitted to preach in England, resolved to go to China, or some other part of the world, there to plant the Christian faith. Dr. Doddridge, before the middle of last century, attempted to form a small society in his own congregation for the propagation of the gospel among the heathen, and strongly urged other ministers to adopt the same course. After educating two students for foreign Mission service, he wrote:—"I hope I can truly say that if God would put it into the heart of my only son to go under this character, I could willingly part with him, though I were never to see him more. What are views of a family and a name when compared with a regard to extending my Redeemer's kingdom and gaining

* "Stoupe told me," says Bishop Burnet, "of a great design Cromwell had intended to begin his kingship with, if he had assumed it. He resolved to set up a council for the Protestant religion in opposition to the *Congregation de Propaganda fide* at Rome. He intended it should consist of seven counsellors and four secretaries for different provinces. These were the first, France, Switzerland, and the Valleys; the Palatinate and the other Calvinists, were the second; Germany, the North, and Turkey were the third; and the East and West Indies were the fourth. The secretaries were to have £500 salary apiece, and to keep a correspondence everywhere to know the state of religion all over the world, that so all good designs might be by their means protected and assisted. They were to have a fund of £10,000 a year at their disposal for ordinary emergencies, but to be further supplied as occasions should require it. Chelsea College was to be made up for them, which was then an old decayed building, that had been at first raised to be a college for writers of controversy."

souls to Christ?" Subsequently, shortly before his death in 1752, he wrote,—“I am now indeed upon having something done among the Dissenters in a more public manner for propagating the gospel abroad. I wish to live to see this design brought into execution, at least into some forwardness, and then I shall die the more cheerfully.” The Countess of Huntingdon greatly desired to spread Christianity in distant lands. In one of her letters, about 1770, she wrote,—“Some great, very great work is intended by the Lord among the heathen. Should this appear, I would be rejoiced to go myself to establish a college for the Indian nations” (North American). Subsequently, her broad, noble sympathies were sent out in another direction. “I saw her,” says the Rev. Mr. Eyre, “a few days before her death. She was then contriving, amidst great lassitude and excruciating pain, to send Missionaries to the islands lately discovered in the South Seas.” *

The DANISH Mission to the Coromandel Coast in the East Indies, was undertaken by Ziegenbalg, under the auspices of Frederick the Fourth of Denmark, in 1705; a date which marks the beginning of Protestant efforts in that vast, populous, and most interesting empire. Great were the sufferings endured in this Mission, not only from pecuniary embarrassments and the hostility of the natives, but from the persecutions of Roman Catholics. Yet, aided by successive reinforcements of labourers from Denmark, by remittances of money from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, incorporated in England in 1701, by the

* Brown's "History of Missions," vol. iii. p. 489.

unexpected bounty of individuals, and by the high patronage of the Archbishop of Canterbury and his royal master George the First, it was prosecuted with vigour and perseverance.* One of the most interesting features of this Mission is connected with the virtue and reputation of the venerable SCHWARTZ, whose entire devotion and captivating address have long rendered him a *study* to Christian Missionaries. Animated by his example, his coadjutors and successors laboured with such indefatigable diligence at Tranquebar, Madras, Cuddalore, Calcutta, Trichinopoly, and Tanjore, that their congregations and schools acquired a firm settlement, and went on steadily increasing. The services of these Missionaries, and of Schwartz in particular, in mitigating the calamities of war and famine, afforded a noble illustration of the *political* advantage arising from the wisdom and uprightness of well-conducted Missions. These services were frankly acknowledged both by Hyder Ali, and by the English civil and military authorities;—a fact standing in strong contrast to the refuted calumnies by which Missionaries were assailed, even in the British Parliament.

“It is an undeniable fact, that no persons have been so popular in India, as the men who have exerted themselves with the most steady and persevering zeal in the dissemination of Christian principles; of which we have a striking example in the excellent Schwartz, for many years a Missionary on the coast of Coromandel, who, by his wise and benevolent conduct, rendered, on various occasions, the most essential

* See Dr. Buchanan's “Christian Researches in Asia.”

service to the British interests, and became the object of the most enthusiastic attachment of the natives."* Splendid was the triumph of Christian worth, when the British East India Company erected a monument, in Madras, to the memory of Schwartz, and when the Rajah of Tanjore placed his portrait amongst those of the princes of his country, in his audience-chamber! This Mission was carried on through various successes and reverses, until, the resources from which its means were drawn having gradually failed, and the most active Missionaries having died, without their places being adequately filled up, it declined from that palmy condition which had brightened its earlier history, whilst its fruit was subsequently gathered, and its fields of labour adopted by other societies, which now successfully occupy them.

Near the time when the Danish Mission to the East began, the pious HANS EGEDE became deeply interested in the spiritual welfare of the Greenlanders. Remembering that their forefathers had been Christians, and learning the miserable state into which the existing generation were sunk, he felt that a special obligation rested on his countrymen to care for a people of the same ancestry, and under the same government with themselves. The utmost efforts that so obscure a man could make to interest others in this work, seemed to be insufficient. After thirteen years of perplexity and vexatious disappointment, he succeeded in procuring the royal sanction to a commercial scheme subservient to his great object, and embarked with his family and

* Rev. R. Hall's Address on Missions.—Works, vol. iii. p. 208. 8vo edition.

a few settlers for that country which had so long engrossed his devout solicitude. The failure of the commercial part of the undertaking soon involved him in deep distress. His own spiritual labours were greatly impeded by the obstinacy of the people, by the ravages of disease, by the miseries of personal and domestic suffering in such circumstances, and by the want of that sympathy and encouragement for which he looked in vain to his native country. After struggling with these difficulties for fifteen years, with little apparent success, he left Greenland with almost a broken heart. However, he lived to see new colonies established on the coast, which were greatly promoted by his personal activity in Denmark; he superintended a seminary patronised by the king for the special purpose of preparing Missionaries for the work in Greenland; and he witnessed the successful industry of his own son in translating portions of the Old and New Testaments, and publishing a dictionary and grammar of the Greenland language. The fruits of this Mission were not such as to satisfy the early expectations of its founder. Yet by the means employed many of the Greenlanders were brought to the knowledge of the Saviour. Civilization with its ameliorating customs was introduced amongst a barbarous people. An impulse, too, was given to that spirit which produced subsequent Missions, conducted on better principles, and distinguished by greater success.

The Missions now referred to, are those of the MORAVIANS. This interesting people claim descent from the Hussites of Bohemia, among the earliest of the Reformed Churches. Compelled by the persecutions of

the times to leave their own country, they settled in various places. A portion of them formed a union with the Swiss Church, to which circumstance has been attributed their title of "United Brethren." The greater number of the wanderers found their way into Saxony and Poland, and were soon blended with the mass of the population. Some of those who were left in Moravia were revived in their religious spirit by the zealous exhortations of Christian David, who (after many unsuccessful attempts in other quarters) obtained permission from Count Zinzendorf to build a house for himself and his family, on the estate of that pious nobleman, in Upper Lusatia. In 1722 this spot became a point of attraction to other families, and the building of other houses soon followed, forming the village of Herrnhuth. The Count having in vain endeavoured to prevail on these Moravian refugees to join the Lutheran Church established in that country, consented to their forming a separate church in communion with the Lutheran. He afterwards became one of their bishops, and the distinguished leader of all their operations.

The partial success of Egede in Greenland has been narrated. At the coronation of the King of Denmark Count Zinzendorf was present, and during that visit to Copenhagen, he met with two of Egede's Greenland converts, and heard that the Mission was about to be given up by the Danish government. His own mind had, many years before, been impressed with anxiety for the heathen, and the same object had taken early possession of the thoughts of the Christian settlers at Herrnhuth. The information received by the Count

in Denmark, naturally formed this general desire for the conversion of the heathen, into a special concern for the inhabitants of Greenland, while, at the same time, the description given by a Negro, of the eagerness of his countrymen generally, and of his sister in particular, for instruction in the gospel, drew their attention to the Island of St. Thomas, in the West Indies. Their character, as a Christian community, thus received its germ on Missionary principles, and was animated, from the first, by the Missionary spirit. In the short space of eight or nine years, this band of six hundred exiles had sent forth Missionaries to Greenland, to St. Thomas, to St. Croix, to Surinam, to Berbice, to the Indians of North America, to Lapland, to Tartary, to Guinea, to the Cape of Good Hope, and to the Island of Ceylon! They afterwards extended to other parts of the West Indies, to Persia, Egypt, Labrador, Tranquebar in the East Indies, and the Nicobar Islands in the Indian Ocean! And now the Missions of the Brethren are found in Greenland, Labrador, British North America, the West Indies, the Mosquito Coast, Surinam, South Africa, Australia, and on the borders of Thibet. They occupy 90 Stations, with 300 European Missionaries, 1150 Native Assistants, and 300 School Teachers.

The history of these Missions is full of interest. For touching instances of heroism, for lively trust in Divine Providence, for the simple and successful preaching of the gospel, and for the accomplishment of the grandest objects in the greatest poverty of outward means, we have not found their parallel in the modern Christian Church. In them we see a model of what,

in this respect, all Christian Churches ought to be,—*Missionary in their essential constitution*, making the dissemination of the gospel through the world a leading object, engaging the constant attention of the whole body of the people. We see what can be done, what *has been* done, by a small community devoted to one object. From what feeble and apparently accidental causes do the greatest undertakings date their origin !

THE WESLEYAN METHODIST MISSIONS form an important link in the series of revivals in Missionary enterprise. They sprang from a train of striking providential circumstances. They have been favoured with the agency of men distinguished by their laboriousness and zeal. Any man who has candidly considered the condition of this country, when Mr. Wesley and his companions began their labours, must be convinced that they were raised up by the Head of the Church for the accomplishment of ends incalculably momentous to the spiritual interests of the empire. Whatever objections may be entertained, whether from prejudice or from principle, against some of the doctrines maintained by them, or against the system of their ecclesiastical government, it is very certain that they are now, as they have ever been, distinguished by their active zeal in bringing home the plain and vital doctrines of the gospel to the consciences and the hearts of men.

Yet it is not in the labours and successes of this large body, that we see the whole of the revival of Missionary spirit which has arisen to diffuse so many blessings through this and other nations. The impulse given both to the clergy and to the laity in the Estab-

lished Church, and the renovated life and vigour imparted to the churches inheriting the principles of the English Nonconformists, are to be included in our estimate. The spirit which animated John Wesley, and which, joined to his extraordinary powers and attainments, ranks him among the great men of the earth, was breathed on others besides those who retained his name; and that spirit still lives to actuate religious communities which differ, notwithstanding, from Wesley and his followers, in many points of great importance.

It was not likely that those schemes of extending usefulness, which had been attended with such wonderful success in Great Britain, Ireland, and America, and which had induced Mr. Wesley to direct his views to the European continent, would long be confined within these limits. It was, however, in circumstances which, in ordinary language, were altogether of an accidental nature, and not in any preconcerted plan, that the Wesleyan Missions to the heathen took their rise. Long before any formal Missions were undertaken, Mr. Gilbert, Speaker of the House of Assembly in Antigua, had visited this country for the benefit of his health, and received the gospel under the ministry of Mr. Wesley. Returning to Antigua with this *new spirit*, he laboured for the conversion both of the Whites and of the Negro Slaves; and having encountered, as became a Christian, much opposition and calumny, he succeeded in forming a Christian Society of about two hundred members, over which he presided with paternal fidelity and tenderness until his death.

Many years after, the remains of this interesting Society were collected by a shipwright of the name of

Baxter, who had joined a Methodist Society in England, and who had gone out to Antigua in the employ of government. By such labours as he could devote after the secular toils of the day were over, he was the instrument, in a few years, of raising the Society to nearly two thousand members. Mr. Baxter subsequently relinquished his lucrative situation, and gave himself entirely to the service of the gospel. He was aided, at first, by a brother Missionary whose original destination was Nova Scotia, for which place he had left England in company with Dr. Coke and two other preachers. Dr. Coke's visit to the West Indies was occasioned by a succession of storms which prevented his reaching Nova Scotia. During this and subsequent voyages, he established Missions at Antigua, St. Vincent's, St. Christopher's, St. Eustatius, Barbadoes, Dominica, Tortola, Jamaica, and other islands; and laid the train for subsequent Missions to Bermuda, the Bahamas, and St. Domingo. The difficulties with which many of these Missions had to struggle were often of the most appalling description; and the slanders and reproaches that fell to the lot of their supporters and advocates at home were such as would have overwhelmed them, had they not been sustained by the consciousness that they were engaged in the work of the Lord.

The heart of Dr. Coke had become so thoroughly kindled with Missionary ardour, that he could not rest without engaging the Society to direct its energies to the Eastern World. Associated with men of less sanguine temperament, who were deterred from entering into his large views by the pressure already on

their financial means, he proposed, at the age of sixty-six, to take with him a band of Missionaries to Ceylon ; and, to remove the difficulty he saw might prevent the concurrence of his brethren, he offered to advance six thousand pounds from his own fortune. He at length sailed, under sanction of the Conference, but died on the voyage, and was committed by his mourning companions with every circumstance of solemnity and veneration to the deep. He who for thirty years was absorbed in the work of Missions to the heathen, who seems to have been the first to think of the South Sea Islanders, who crossed the Atlantic eighteen times in this service, who begged from door to door, and pleaded with those in authority in England on its behalf, who, by his holy zeal, amiable temper, unwearied activity, and generous self-devotion, was the chief agent in exciting, and for many years conducting, those operations which not long after his death led to the forming of one of the most prominent and useful Missionary Societies in existence,—such a man *must* be held in affectionate remembrance by us all. The cold-hearted suspected him of enthusiasm. The “children of this world” thought they had explained his character when they charged him with ambition. *Such* enthusiasm and ambition are but too rarely seen ! Let not Christians of any party lose sight of his example, nor neglect the duty under which we are all laid, equally with him, of cultivating that *spirit* which the world derides, because it neither feels nor understands it.

The development of these early efforts has been most marked. The Wesleyan Missionary Society devotes a considerable portion of its great resources to nominally

Christian spheres of labour. Thus it has Mission agents in Ireland, in Australia, and British North America; in Germany, Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal. The efforts among the heathen extend to Ceylon, India (especially in the south), China, South Africa, Western Africa, the West Indies, and a portion of Polynesia. The entire income is now £147,000, about two-thirds of which is expended on work among heathen nations, sustaining 303 European Missions and 935 Native agents. These superintend a yet larger number of subordinate agents.

It was near the time of Dr. Coke's first visit to the West Indies, that a small company of BAPTIST ministers met in 1792, at Kettering, in Northamptonshire, for the institution of a MISSIONARY SOCIETY, which, though extremely small in its beginning (the original subscription was thirteen pounds, two shillings, and sixpence), soon acquired considerable encouragement in Baptist Churches, and from Christians of several other communions. The personal services of Mr. Thomas, surgeon of an Indiaman, prepared the way for the introduction of Mr. Carey into India, who was afterwards joined by Messrs. Marshman and Ward. The establishment of these excellent Missionaries at Serampore, a Danish settlement near Calcutta, arose out of very trying circumstances. Though contrary to their own desire, it proved of the highest importance to the permanence and prosperity of the Mission. The surprising industry of the Serampore brethren in the translation and printing of the Scriptures, besides numerous grammars and works of a philological, scientific, and literary, as well as of a religious nature, in a

great variety of languages, effected much for India. Their labours as preachers of the gospel extended over an immense track of Continental India, and to Ceylon, Burmah, Assam, Java, and Sumatra. Besides the direct labours of its founders, and those of their brethren, under the immediate auspices of the Baptist Missionary Society in England, we have to take into account the direction of British zeal towards India, which they have been the main instruments of exciting, and the *general impression* both in England and in the East, in favour of Indian Missions which their learning, character, and perseverance have produced. It is no small thing to record of three Missionaries, that they contributed to Christian objects more than fifty thousand pounds! In this fact we see Christian principle working in a style that demonstrates the weakness and ignorance as well as malignity which so easily accounts for the sublimest efforts of Missionary zeal on the vulgar principles of a selfish world. And now this Society, with an income of thirty-two thousand pounds, and a staff of 283 Missionaries and Native Preachers, has been greatly honoured of God in Bengal and the North-West Provinces of India, has been most successful in the West Indies, and has Missions in Ceylon.

It has already been hinted that the first idea of sending Missionaries to the South Sea Islands has been said to have risen in the mind of Dr. Coke, though it did not give birth to any practical measures for their evangelization on the part of the Christian brethren immediately associated with him. The discovery of those islands by Captain Cook, in his voyage made by order of George the Third for observing the transit of Venus,

created a powerful interest throughout the British Empire; but, as was observed by the originators of the Missions to them, they afforded little to excite the ambition of princes or the avarice of merchants, and they were again sinking into oblivion, and were left to that state of barbarism in which they were discovered.

The year 1795 witnessed the formation of the LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY, an institution on a Catholic principle, for uniting Christians in the propagation of the gospel among the heathen, without any reference to those conflicting views of the government of the Church which have divided the body of the faithful. The unanimity and ardour which marked the rise of this institution were soon diffused from London through the kingdom, and were eagerly imbibed by Christians on the Continent of Europe and in America. The first attention of this Society was directed, by the dying bequest of the Countess of Huntingdon, and by the zeal and liberality of her Chaplain, Dr. Haweis, to the South Sea Islands; and the object was pursued with such warmth and energy, that in the following year the ship *Duff*, commanded by Captain Wilson, sailed with twenty-nine Missionaries. After a tempestuous voyage, in which they called at Rio Janeiro, and from thence took the eastward passage, they arrived, in little more than five months, at Tahiti. The natives received them with open arms. The district of Matavia, with a large house, originally built by the king's father for Captain Bligh of the *Bounty*, was granted to them by the king.

The earlier attempts of the Missionaries to introduce the gospel to this people were impeded by many obstacles, especially those arising from the Arreois—

a species of licentious conjurors, who bound themselves by a vow to murder every infant born among them. The extremely barbarous condition of the natives was, also, a great hindrance. The Missionaries were thus led to make vigorous efforts for their civilization, which were attended with the happiest effects. This circumstance gave the Christian teachers a well-earned and honourable influence with both the chiefs and the people. Encouraged by the accounts brought by Captain Wilson, on his return, the Society resolved on a second voyage, and sent out twenty-nine new Missionaries, with the Rev. W. Howell as their superintendent. Several of these Missionaries were qualified by medical knowledge and the acquisition of several useful arts to promote the civilization of the islanders. The disasters of this second voyage are well known, having been described at length in the affecting early communications of the Society.* Scarcely had the tidings of these calamities reached England, when they were followed by intelligence of the removal of great part of the first Missionaries from Tahiti. The cause of their departure may be briefly explained.—There was a deeply-laid conspiracy of some of the natives to plunder the Missionaries; various difficulties arose from the prejudices and impatience of the Tahitians in connection with the medical treatment of the strangers; and an attempt was made to murder them, when peacefully engaged in assisting the captain of an English ship to recover some deserters from his crew. In the consternation excited by these circumstances, most of the Missionaries left the island, and returned to New South Wales, where

* See "The Night of Toil."

they met with the kindest treatment from the Governor, and received a brother's welcome from the Rev. Mr. Marsden, the chaplain at that colony. Here they laboured for the promotion of their spiritual objects. Their success, however, was far from being great. They were exposed to sufferings scarcely inferior to those from which they had escaped. One of their number was murdered. Some of them unhappily conducted themselves in such a manner, that their removal from Tahiti was justly regarded as a blessing to the Mission in that island. The seven Missionaries who remained after the departure of their brethren, were left in a trying condition, amidst alarms and native wars. No sooner was outward peace restored, than the religious defection of two of their own small company overwhelmed them with the keenest sorrow.

In the year 1800, this little band was reinforced by the arrival of twelve additional Missionaries. They co-operated with their brethren in the acquisition of the language, in teaching the children, and in preaching the gospel. They were greatly discouraged by the want of success. The prospect of a general civil war, added to the urgent advice of the king, made it appear to them a duty to abandon an enterprise which had so long been hopeless, and now was wrapped in deeper gloom than ever. They saw with grief and despondency the rapid decrease of the population from the frequency and the destructive fierceness of their wars, aided by the practice of infanticide, by the offering of human victims in sacrifice to their gods, by the shocking licentiousness of their habits, and by the terrible ravages of disease. —Here, in all human appearance, the Mission ended,

amid the scoffs of its enemies, and the lamentations of its friends.

About two years after the inauspicious apparent failure of the first Mission to Tahiti, several of the Missionaries who had long desired to resume their labours (in which desire they were strengthened by the earnest invitations of King Pomare), took up their abode in the neighbouring island of Eimeo. It was but a few months after their settlement there, that Pomare, who had formerly been quite indifferent to Christianity, expressed to them his persuasion of the truth and value of the gospel, and desired to be baptised.

The change in Pomare was followed by the most encouraging and striking consequences. Other individuals were brought at the same time to the knowledge of the Saviour, and one, who died, left a pleasing testimony of his repentance and unfeigned faith. From this time the Missionaries were comforted under the remembrance of former disappointment and the recent experience of severe domestic calamities, by the general impression in favour of Divine things that was spreading on the minds of the people. It was now hoped that even the instructions of past years had not been lost, but had been going on till some powerful impulse, guided by the Spirit of Grace, should arise to secure the triumph of the Gospel over Idolatry entrenched in barbarism.

This new state of society awoke in Tahiti, as such changes even on a smaller scale have awakened in all places, the bitterest enmity of those who continued in their former state. Priests, chiefs, and warriors resolved to exterminate the Christians. Their malicious

designs were anticipated. The converts took refuge in Eimeo. The idolaters quarrelled among themselves. On the restoration of peace, Pomare and his Christian adherents returned to Tahiti. Though a seeming reconciliation was effected, the Christians were attacked when engaged in divine worship. They were better prepared than their enemies expected. They defended themselves, mingling the prayers of faith with the war-shouts of the foe. The idolatrous chief was pierced near the beginning of the onslaught, and his party were entirely vanquished. The failure of this treacherous assault was attended with important results. The assailants were dispirited by the death of their leader. The lenity and even kindness with which the Christians pursued their victory astonished and subdued them. Pomare was reinstated, by universal consent, in the government of Tahiti and the dependent isles, of which the rebellion seven years before had deprived him. The people of Tahiti unanimously declared that they would no longer trust the gods that had deceived them. They admired and embraced the new faith, which had taught these warriors such unwonted mercy to the conquered. They abolished idolatry in Tahiti and Eimeo. The spirit of this momentous change reached the adjacent islands. The chiefs besought the Missionaries to come and teach them. One of the chiefs, Mai of Borabora, appealed to them in a short sentence involving the whole argument for Missions,—“*Jesus Christ and His apostles did not confine themselves to one country or one place.*”

The labours of the Missionaries were now prosecuted with a vigour and to an extent proportioned to the new

aspect of things around them, and beautiful indeed was the living picture that sprang up in contrast to the blighting influence of idolatry; large bodies assembling from great distances at their own desire, eager for instruction, giving enlightened answers to the questions of their teachers;—individuals seeking the covert of the lonely bush for private prayer;—domestic worship conducted in nearly every hut;—meetings for social prayer, when preaching could not be obtained, in which the converted priests of the ancient superstition often presided;—the Sabbath a day of perfect rest;—schools whether for children or adults gladly crowded;—numerous efforts of industry made to purchase the gospels and other books, and groups of men, women, and children, reading them beneath the shade of their noble trees;—Missions commenced for the spread of the gospel;—marriage instituted and honoured;—family peace prevailing;—infanticide abolished;—licentious amusements discontinued;—population rapidly increasing;—roads, laws, arts, spreading their conveniences, protection, and enjoyments over some of the loveliest spots on earth, which, but for the introduction of the gospel, might have been the dismal abodes of war and misery.

All this opening promise has been greatly clouded, by no failure in the Mission itself, but by the pernicious results of the French Protectorate. Its establishment was an act of the grossest injustice, which, whilst disgraceful to the French nation, has wrought untold mischief among the people they have tempted and driven back into sin.

This “beginning of the Gospel” in Tahiti has been

followed by widespread efforts and remarkable success in numerous groups of islands in the Great Pacific ; and now the London Missionary Society in the Hervey, Society, Austral, Samoan and Loyalty groups of islands, and in New Guinea ; the Wesleyans in the Tongan and Fijian groups ; the American Congregationalists in the Mosquitos and Sandwich Islands ; and other Agencies elsewhere, have spread a light and won a success of which we shall tell in a subsequent chapter.

The same Society which was instrumental in producing the interesting changes in the Pacific, commenced in 1798 similar operations in the unpromising region of South Africa, which had been recently brought within the limits of the British Empire. Long before, Dr. Johnson, in contemplating that portion of the world, had expressed himself in the following just and powerful language :—“What mankind had lost and gained by European discoveries and conquests it would be long to compare, and very difficult to estimate. Much knowledge has been acquired, and much cruelty been committed : the belief of religion has been very little propagated, and its laws have been outrageously and enormously violated. The Europeans have scarcely visited any coast, but to gratify avarice and to extend corruption ; to arrogate dominion without right, and practise cruelty without incentive. Happy had it then been for the oppressed, if the designs of Henry had slept in his bosom ; and, surely, more happy for the oppressors ! But there is reason to hope, that out of so much evil, good may sometimes be produced ; and that the light of the gospel will at last illuminate the

sands of Africa and the deserts of America, though its progress cannot but be slow, when it is so much obstructed by the lives of Christians.”*

The Mission to South Africa was commenced by Dr. Vanderkemp, under the hearty auspices of General Dundas, the British Lieutenant-Governor. Considerable difficulties were presented in the changes of government, the wandering habits of the people, and the opposition of the Dutch Colonists; but by wisdom and conciliation, joined to zeal and perseverance, Vanderkemp and his associates maintained their ground. Their labours were crowned with large success in the temporal improvement of the natives, and in the conversion of many of them to the Saviour. Settlements were formed at Cape Town, Bethelsdorp, Zak River, Orange River, Griqua Town, Pella, Lattakoo, and at the Kraal of Africaner. This fierce and powerful robber had been for many years the dread of the Colony. He was transformed by the power of Divine grace accompanying the gospel into a meek and consistent Christian, and died peacefully in the faith of Christ. The Travels of Mr. Campbell, Mr. Freeman, and the Researches of Dr. Philip, throw much light on the general condition of the Hottentots at that early period, and on the progress and effects of the gospel amongst them. From these works it would be easy and gratifying to fill the pages of this volume with copious and interesting extracts. The following fine passage is still true, and exhibits the inevitable result of

* Introduction to “The World Displayed.” The reference is to Prince Henry of Portugal, the first encourager of remote navigation.

Missionary operations in a light too little regarded:—
“To such as think that nothing is doing by the Missions, unless they are continually hearing of miraculous conversions, I must be allowed to hazard a remark, for the accuracy of which I can vouch, as far as my own observation extends,—that the number of conversions which come under the notice of Missionaries does not bear a greater proportion to the general good done by the Missions, than the conversions and triumphant deaths recorded in our monthly publications in England, do to the entire sum of good done in our native country, by the preaching of the gospel and the institutions of Christianity. While the Missionaries are complaining that they have so very few striking instances of the power of Divine grace to record in the communications to their respective Societies, let it be remembered, that their influence is much more extensive, and the change carrying on by them much greater, than they themselves are able to imagine. In those countries where our Missions have gained a marked ascendancy, there is scarcely one spot, however much secluded, impervious to their all-pervading light and heat. Where, perhaps, they are grossly misrepresented and spoken against, they are checking the grinding power of oppression, raising the standard of morals, proclaiming liberty to the captives, opening the prison doors to those that are bound, diffusing abroad the lights of science and literature, undermining the false systems of religion against which they have to contend, multiplying those charitable institutions that have for their object the relief of suffering humanity, vanquishing infidelity by the most direct and powerful

of all arguments, by living exhibitions of the truth of Christianity, and changing the very face of our colonies; while they are accelerating the spread of that moral revolution which will shortly usher in the kingdoms of this world, as the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ." *

The same motives which prompted the Missions to the South Seas and to South Africa, induced the Directors in 1804 to send forth Messrs. Ringletaub, Des Granges, and Cran, to the Coromandel Coast in India; and subsequently to establish Missions in Travancore, at several stations in South-Eastern and South-Western India, in Bengal, the North-West Provinces, and in the Himalayas.

In 1807 the same Society sent Dr. Morrison, the first Protestant Missionary to China. The singular language and manners of the Chinese, and their peculiar jealousy of strangers, presented greater impediments than, perhaps, are found among any other people, to the introduction of the gospel. Dr. Morrison so far overcame these difficulties as to have printed his translation of the Scriptures into their language, besides a Dictionary, a Grammar, and another splendid philological work, to facilitate the studies of others. By his long residence in the country, too, as the interpreter to the East India Company, he acquired confidence and influence amongst the natives. Great as were the difficulties in his way, and much as they were increased by the opposition of the government to the Roman Catholic Missionaries and their converts, there were various features of this Mission, marking it as one

* "Researches in South Africa," by John Philip, D.D.

which ranks with the most signal and important enterprises of the Christian Church in modern times.

The Missionaries of this Society were introduced into the West Indies in 1807 by Mr. Post, a pious Dutch gentleman, anxious for the instruction of his slaves; though Moravian and Wesleyan Missionaries were there previously. From the commencement of the Mission till his death, he displayed the most steady, generous, and ardent devotion to its objects. Notwithstanding the disadvantages arising from the SLAVERY of the people, and the martyrdom of one of their Missionaries, the persecuted JOHN SMITH, the Society prosecuted its labours at Demerara and Berbice with clear tokens of the Divine blessing.

It would be unjust to this Society not to introduce the glowing testimony of Dr. Brown to the GENERAL MISSIONARY IMPRESSION PRODUCED ON THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AT LARGE by its formation and first success. "Independent of the extraordinary success which has, at length, crowned the Mission in Otaheite and the neighbouring islands, the undertaking, in the first instance, gave such a mighty impulse to the Christian world, that had it entirely failed as to the conversion of the South Sea islanders, the whole expense and labour attending it would have been amply compensated by the powerful effect which it has had in promoting the interests of Christianity in other parts of the world, particularly in Pagan countries. Eliot and Mayhew and Brainerd, the Danes and the Moravians, the Methodists and the Baptists, had all engaged in Missionary undertakings, and most of them with considerable appearances of success. But their opera-

tions never awakened the Christian world from the lethargy into which it had fallen. Individuals were interested and delighted with their exertions; but the great body of professing Christians scarcely ever heard either of them or of their labours. It was not till the LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY was formed;—it was not till the magnificent Mission to the South Sea Islands was undertaken, the splendour of which dazzled the eyes of mankind, that the Christian world was aroused from its slumbers. Then a general concern was excited throughout the whole of Christendom, for the conversion of the heathen. Old establishments were supported with more vigour, and prosecuted with fresh zeal. New institutions were formed for the propagation of the gospel at home and abroad, some of which have already been crowned with extensive success, while others promise a yet more abundant harvest. In short, a new impulse was given to the operations of the Christian world; and this, we think, may be traced, in no inconsiderable degree, to the splendour and magnificence of the first Mission to the South Sea Islands.” *

And now with a purely Missionary income of £111,000 a year,—one-fifth of which is derived from its foreign fields of labour,—this Society employs the Agents, and has gained the results tabulated in the following statistical statement, along with 60,000 Scholars in its schools.

* “Brown’s History of the Propagation of Christianity,” vol. ii. p. 234, third edition.

	English Mission- aries.	Native Ordained Pastors.	Native Teachers.	Church Members.	Native Adherents.
CHINA	18	4	56	1,655	3,045
NORTH INDIA .	14	6	17	359	1,588
SOUTH INDIA .	21	10	70	931	5,244
TRAVANCORE .	8	9	196	2,588	32,024
MADAGASCAR .	23	50	2,683	38,000	300,000
SOUTH AFRICA .	30	..	107	5,598	31,410
WEST INDIES .	12	1	23	5,459	17,660
POLYNESIA . .	26	50	343	13,705	68,552
Totals	152	130	3,495	68,295	459,523

The institution of the Missionary Society in London was followed in 1796 by the formation of the SCOTTISH AND GLASGOW SOCIETIES, which selected Western Africa as the sphere of their efforts. A Mission was afterwards commenced in Tartary; and they also laboured with much energy in the West Indies. These Societies have since been merged in the CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, the FREE CHURCH, and the UNITED PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETIES.

The commencement of the nineteenth century witnessed the establishment of the CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY. The Missionaries of this Society have laboured with great assiduity, and have been blessed with much encouragement amidst great trials and a fearful sacrifice of lives, in the destructive climate of Western Africa. The early difficulties were unspeakably aggravated by the terrible influence of the slave trade. It is well known that the abolition of that trade by the British Parliament was followed up by the settlement at Sierra Leone, for the reception of negroes recaptured from smugglers in that illegal and accursed traffic. Here the Missionaries entered on a trying but

interesting field of labour. The education of children—the preaching of the gospel, often with marked success—and the outward improvement of the people at Regent's Town and other places in the colony, soon bore testimony to the fidelity, earnestness, and patience with which these holy men fulfilled the duties to which they had devoted themselves.

At the suggestion of Mr. Marsden, the chaplain at New South Wales, the Church Missionary Society formed a Christian settlement in New Zealand. The Missionaries proceeded in their work, and were as successful as could be expected, in the peculiar circumstances in which they stood, among so fierce and barbarous a people.

The next scene that opens on us in the view of these important Missions is in the vast sphere of India. This work began under the auspices of the Venerable Archdeacon Corrie. The first Missionary was Abdool Messee, a converted Mahomedan—a man of good abilities and indefatigable industry, happily combined with decided Christian principles and feelings. By the efforts of Abdool at Agra, great attention to the gospel was excited among all classes of the natives. In 1814, two Missionaries arrived from England, at Madras. Since that time the Society has been spreading the blessings of Christian education, literature, and institutions over a large portion of the Indian Continent. It has met with the most marked success in Tinnevely; it has numerous Mission Stations in South India, in Bengal, and the North-West Provinces; and its efforts are more widely diffused throughout India than those of any other Society. It has been specially active in

the formation of female schools.—In Antigua, Barbadoes, and other parts of the West Indies, this Society has devoted part of its funds to the support of schools, which have, as in other instances, been followed with most beneficial results. Large portions of the funds of the Society have also been employed in the translation and publication of valuable works, for distribution in Mahomedan and heathen nations.

This active spirit of diffusing the gospel, we have previously observed, was an essential feature of the churches of Christ planted in America. In 1810 some students preparing for the ministry at Andover College, having dedicated themselves to the service of Christ among the heathen, the General Association of Massachusetts established "THE AMERICAN BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS," consisting chiefly of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches of America. Southern and Western India, the Turkish and Persian Empires, and China, are the principal scenes of their labours in the East. Their efforts among the American Indians have been conducted on a most extensive scale with great zeal and vigour. From the same Board, the first Missionaries visited the Sandwich Islands, on which the same brightness of spiritual glory is seen as on the other islands of the same ocean which we have before contemplated.

Mr. Judson was one of the students in Andover College when the Missionary spirit awoke in that seminary. Dr. Buchanan's "Star in the East," led his thoughts to an Oriental Mission. With such thoughts he visited England under the direction of the Board of Foreign Missions. After his return he

accompanied Mr. Rice, and Mr. and Mrs. Newell to India. From the government of India they met with great annoyances. Their stay at Madras was short. They proceeded to Rangoon in Burmah. Mr. and Mrs. Judson and Mr. Rice having joined the Baptists whilst in the East, a Missionary impulse before unknown was now given to that denomination in the United States. The AMERICAN BAPTIST BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS was formed in May, 1814. The account of the Mission to Burmah, by Mrs. Judson, minutely details the origin, progress, trials, and successes of an enterprise on which, in this general and rapid survey, we can only cast a hurried glance.* The Boards of Missions in America were followed, in 1817, by the UNITED FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY—consisting chiefly of the different bodies of Presbyterians in that country, and engaged in propagating the gospel among the Indians of North America.

These Societies were the Pioneers of modern Missionary enterprise. They have been followed by a large number of others, which are worthy of equal honour, and participate in the same noble work, though their spheres of labour are more circumscribed. It is indeed one of the most auspicious signs of the times that almost every section of the Church of Christ feels called upon to share in the great attempt to convert the heathen. This will be seen by a careful perusal of the following tables :—

* See the Memoirs of Mrs. Judson, by her husband; and of Dr. Judson, by Dr. Wayland and Dr. H. Bonar.

I.—MISSIONARY SOCIETIES OF GREAT BRITAIN.

When founded.	Name.	Annual Income.	No. of Missionaries.	Native Preachers.	Native Adherents.	Scholars.	Spheres of Labour.
1701	Propagation of Gospel Society ..	£52,000*	..	..	26,561	..	India, W. Indies, S. Africa, &c.
1792	Baptist Missionary Society	31,834	..	229	..	..	NW India, W. Indies, W. Afr. China
1795	London Missionary Society	111,517	153	3,641	469,242	60,991	{ India, China, South Africa, Poly-
1799	Church Missionary Society	149,697	204	2,041	100,282	42,505	{ nesia, W. Indies, Madagascar.
1816	Gen. Baptist Missionary Society.	8,944	7	1	2,447	1,290	{ India, China, Africa, N. America,
1817	Wesleyan Missionary Society	110,000*	170	1,020	297,000	61,000	{ Turkey, Syria, New Zealand, &c.
1817	Moravian Missions	4,360	..	815	35,671	33,749	{ Orissa, India.
1825	Church of Scotland Miss. Society	11,081	17	12	..	4,197	{ India, China, Africa, W. Indies,
1840	Welsh Calvinistic Methodist do..	2,728	7	..	792	1,300	{ Polynesia, New Zealand.
1852	Turkish Miss. Aid Society	1,800	..	..	..	..	{ N. Europe & America, W. Indies,
1840	Irish Presbyterian Miss. Society.	6,150	..	..	..	..	{ S. Africa, Australia, Thibet.
1841	Edinburgh Medical Mission	1,858	..	..	..	..	India.
1842	Reformed Presbyterian Mission..	2,090	12	78	2,800	1,890	Eastern Pongal, Brittany.
1843	Free Church Scotland Mission..	33,931	25	207	8,746	9,282	Turkey, Persia.
1844	English Presbyterian Mission ..	7,668	14	51	10,558	..	Western India, China.
1844	South American Mission	9,342	12	26	..	..	New Hebrides.
1847	United Presbyterian Mission....	36,671	49	149	25,184	8,490	India, South Africa.
..	Methodist New Connexion	1,500	..	..	..	..	China, Bengal.
1860	United Meth. Free Church ditto..	5,000	20	114	5,553	6,368	Terra del Fuego, Chili, &c.
1863	Foreign Evangelist Mission	2,446	3	..	..	..	W. Africa, Rajputana, W. Indies.
1867	Primitive Meth. Miss. Society ..	3,171	11	..	..	..	China.
..	Friends' Forgn. Miss. Association	..	..	..	..	..	{ Jamaica, China, New Zealand,
..	Assam and Cachar Miss. Society..	..	..	..	..	..	{ East and West Africa.
1858	SCHOOL SOCIETIES.	..	..	..	..	..	South and West Africa.
..	Chm. Vernacular Edu. So. for India	8,290	..	175	..	7,500	Madagascar; Jubbulpore, India.
..	Indian Female Normal School ..	5,756	..	66	..	776	India.
..	and Instruction Society .... }	..	..	..	..	..	India.
..	Lebanon Schools Society .....	..	..	..	..	..	Syria.
..	Ladies' Assoc. for Syrian Females	7,296	..	..	..	1,508	Syria.

* Proportion of income devoted to Missions among the Heathen.

II.—CONTINENTAL MISSIONARY SOCIETIES.*

United Brethren, or Moravian Missionary Society.
 Berlin Missionary Society.
 Rhenish Missionary Society.
 Evangelical Missionary Society, Berlin.
 North German Missionary Society, Bremen.
 Leipsic Lutheran Missionary Society.
 Basle Mission.
 Paris Missionary Society.
 Netherlands Missionary Society.
 Netherlands Missionary Union.
 Utrecht Missionary Society.
 Netherlands Reformed Missionary Society.
 Danish Missionary Society.
 Norwegian Missionary Society.

* * These have an aggregate annual income of not less than £120,000, and sustain 430 European Missionaries.

III.—AMERICAN SOCIETIES.

American Board of Missions.
 American and Foreign Christian Union, Continental, &c., Society.
 American Missionary Association.
 American Baptist Missionary Union.
 Dutch Reformed Church.
 Methodist Episcopal Mission.
 American Protestant Episcopal Church.
 American Presbyterian Missions.

* * These have an aggregate annual income of £320,000, and sustain 550 American Missionaries.

In addition to the foregoing classified organised agencies, there is much individual and private effort, which cannot be tabulated.

The Missionary value of such Institutions as the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the Religious Tract Society, is immense, and merits the most warm and cordial recognition from all the friends of Missions.

* See "London and Calcutta," by Rev. Dr. Mullens.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SUCCESS OF MODERN MISSIONS—NARRATIVE.

Seventy years of Missionary Enterprise.—Providential Opening out of the World for the Work.—Obstacles and Hindrances.—Missionary Agencies a token of the World's Progress and Evangelization.—Their Briefness and small Proportion to the Magnitude of the Work.—Valuable Aid of Native Evangelists.—Modern Diffusion of Civilization and Christian Ideas an Indirect Effect of Missionary Labour.—The Direct Results of Missions: The West Indies: Polynesia; South Africa; Madagascar; The Turkish Empire; India; Burmah; China; Siam and Japan; The Indian Archipelago; New Zealand; Extreme North of Europe; Greenland and the North of America.—Reality and Greatness of the Work Accomplished: Abolition of Heathen Customs; Changes in Social Life; Infusion of Christian Ideas; Spread of Education.—The Spiritual Influence of Missions: Renewal of Life and Hope in the Soul; Triumphant Deaths of Christian Converts.—Urgent claim of these Facts upon every individual Christian.

WE have shown that it is the primary duty of the Christian Church to aim at the diffusion of the Truth and the conversion of the world. This duty, therefore, is not dependent on success or failure, but on the will of God and the Saviour's command and example. Success, however, is grateful and stimulating, since it encourages those whose faith and convictions of duty are weak, exhibits the Divine approbation, and proves that, even judged by the low standard of the world, the Missionary enterprise is worthy of encouragement, because it consummates the ends at which it aims.

It will not be difficult to show that modern Missionary effort, during the past seventy years, has actually achieved more splendid results than have been gained in the same length of time during the past eighteen centuries; that its results have far exceeded the expectations of the "fathers and founders" of modern Missions; and that, taking into account the obstacles to be encountered, the general apathy and indifference, and, in many instances, hostility of professing Christians, and the comparatively small amount of agency that has been employed, the success has been large and encouraging, — such, that is, as amply to recompense the Church for all its expenditure of effort, wealth, and life, and to justify her in prosecuting her enterprise with fresh vigour and hope.

The manner in which the world has been opened out for Christian effort, since the beginning of the present century, is very worthy of notice.

Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Austria were then effectually barred against Protestantism; and other Roman Catholic states were almost as jealous and exclusive. There was not a single Mahomedan country fairly open to Christian agencies, and in most of them proselytism to any great extent was impossible, so sure were the penalties awaiting the convert. China and Japan were rigidly closed. In the Native States of India, then so numerous and powerful, Christian propagandism would not have been allowed; neither was it there in our own newly-acquired Northern dominions, whilst in the South it was jealously watched and suspected. The whole of Africa, with the exception of the extreme south, was little known and greatly

dreaded. So closed were nine-tenths of heathendom, that the newly-formed Missionary Societies felt it difficult to find spheres for their operations, and had to occupy, not such spheres as they preferred, but such as they could enter.

All this aroused the Church to energy and prayer, and God seeing her eager desire to preach the gospel to every creature, gradually broke down every barrier, and set before her a wide and an effectual door. It is only by recollecting the exclusiveness and intolerance of Roman Catholic nations, seventy and even thirty years ago, and the manner in which their policy was controlled by the priesthood, that we can adequately measure the fact that Spain, Portugal, South America, Italy, and even Rome itself, have now an open Bible, their Protestant churches, and their evangelising associations. Mahomedan exclusiveness has largely given way, though not to the same extent; so that Egypt, Syria, Turkey, and Persia are the spheres of flourishing Missions. China, Japan, Burmah, and Siam have gradually, though reluctantly, accorded a hearing to the ambassadors of Christ; whilst throughout India the gospel may be freely proclaimed, and in most of its provinces with less opposition than is met with in hundreds of English parishes. Central Asia, where political exclusiveness in Thibet, and Moslem lawlessness and bigotry in Bokhara, Khasgar, and Turkomania are still rampant, is, in fact, the only region actually closed against the Christian Missionary. Thus, almost as completely as Jericho was laid low before the hosts of Israel, is the antichristian world made accessible to Divine Truth.

In estimating the success of Missions, due consideration must be given to the obstacles they have had to contend against, and the amount of preparatory work they have had to accomplish.

The Missionary agents have been exposed to the dangers of unknown and unhealthy climates. They have had to live among rude and savage tribes and races. They have had to conciliate suspicious, lawless, and greedy kings, chiefs, and heathen priests. They have had to gain the confidence of races as peculiar as the Hindus, as exclusive as the Chinese, as savage as the African tribes, as suspicious as the Burmese, and as ignorant as the Polynesian islanders. They have had to learn strange and difficult languages and dialects, without the aid of grammar or lexicon. They have had to create all the Christian and correctly scientific literature which exists in hundreds of islands, among scores of tribes, in several kingdoms, and in some empires. They have had to feel their way to the best methods of destroying superstition and disseminating truth. They have had to build churches and schools, and to gather converts and scholars, and to train all whom they have won to adopt Christian ideas and lead Christian lives, and seek—oh, hard lesson for those nurtured in heathenism!—to be disinterestedly of service to others. Let any one fairly endeavour to estimate the aggregate of all that has thus been accomplished, and he will find that the physical and mental labour has been stupendous, and the result of it vast and gratifying.

The translation of the Scriptures is the most important of these undertakings, whilst it fittingly illus-

trates the forms of labour involved in the others. When the Bible Society commenced its honoured work in 1804, the Holy Scriptures existed in only thirty-four languages and dialects, spoken by less than two hundred millions of our race—not one-sixth of mankind; now it is found in one hundred and seventy-six languages and dialects, spoken by at least one thousand millions, or five-sixths of our race. Indeed, there is not, with the sole exception of Japanese, a single widely-spoken language which has not its translation of the whole Bible.

The creation of Missionary agencies alike marks the growth of public opinion and the progress made toward the world's evangelisation.

We have marked the rise of the principal Missionary Societies, but some notice, however brief, should be given to the comparative insignificance of their first efforts, and to the opposition with which they had to contend. The hostility and ridicule of those who had no sympathy with the forms of religiousness exhibited in the New Testament was to be expected; but the general apathy of professing Christians, and the hostility of many others, seems strange and sad. Certain it is, that the first Societies had few friends and many enemies, whilst numbers, whose sympathy and aid should freely have been given to them, stood coldly and doubtfully aside.* In this respect, Christian

* At a meeting of ministers, held about 1788, at Northampton, Mr. Ryland, senior, called on the young men around him to propose some topic for discussion; on which Mr. Carey rose, and proposed for consideration: "The duty of Christians to attempt the spread of the Gospel among heathen nations." The venerable divine received the proposal with astonishment, and, springing on his feet, denounced the proposition with a frown,

sentiment and opinion has undergone a great and auspicious change; and if few have the zeal and enthusiasm of the past age, still fewer have its apathy, its scepticism, or its disbelief. It is at least admitted generally in Christian circles, that the heathen should have the gospel preached to them. In accordance with this accepted principle, every denomination has its Foreign Missionary Society, and a reproach rests on individual congregations of any size which do not annually recognise and aid their work. The Missionary spirit—estimated either by the teachings or example of the New Testament, or by any set of opinions and sentiments fairly deduced from them—must be pronounced still to be painfully low; but comparing what it now is with what it was eighty, sixty, and even fifty years ago, it is clear that a great and gratifying advance has been made.

In estimating the success of modern Missions, not only the comparatively small number of agents should be borne in mind, but also the short time during which they or their predecessors have been actually at work.

The change in opinion has led to an improvement in revenue and resource, and this again to an advance in actual agency. Eighty years ago, it is questionable if there were as many as 80 Missionaries labouring in all heathendom. Greenland, Lapland, the West Indies, South Africa, Ceylon, and South India had

and thundered out: "Young man, sit down! When God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine."—*Marshman's Life and Times of Carey, Marshman, and Ward.* vol. i. c. 1.

When the Baptist Missionary Society was formed at Kettering, in 1792, the first collection only amounted to £13. 2s. 6d.

a few each ; and oh, how few ! But in all China, Japan, Burmah, and Siam ; in Central and Northern India ; in Central Asia and Central Africa ; in Egypt, Turkey, and Persia ; and in all the thousand islands of Asia, Australasia, and the Pacific, there was not one ! The whole land was desolate ! Superstition reigned unchecked, and no voice in clear and faithful utterance proclaimed the rights of the one true God, or the mercy and grace of His Son. Even sixty years ago, it is questionable if all the existing Missionary Societies had as many as 500 Missionaries. Gradually, however, the number has increased, until it is now close upon 2,000 ; and of these about one-half are the agents of our English Societies,—the rest in equal proportions of those from the Continent and from America.

But the Missionaries do not now labour alone. The most useful fruit of their toil is seen in the large number—certainly not less than 16,000—of native preachers and teachers who now aid them. All these, or their fathers, were once adherents of the superstitions they now are striving to destroy. Sixty years ago there were not a thousand such ; and the growing efficiency of these men is a more gratifying fact than even their multiplication. There are now many Chinese, Burmese, Hindu, Polynesian, and Malagashi preachers and pastors, whose ability, zeal, piety, and efficiency is undoubted ; and the number of such is greatly on the increase. The proof of this is seen in the fact that in large numbers of the older stations the foreign element can be wholly or in part dispensed with—or be employed in purely evangelistic effort—whilst the care

and culture of the Christianised community can be intrusted to indigenous agencies.*

The diffusion of Christian ideas is a most marked effect of preaching and teaching in heathen lands.

The dispersion of the Jews through the ancient civilised world, and the translation of their Scriptures into the Greek tongue, were undoubtedly the grand means of preparing the minds of devout, thoughtful,

* In 1820, the American Missionaries commenced their labours in the Sandwich Islands. For twelve years they had no success; but then the tide turned, and now the islands are Christian. Of the 120,000 inhabitants, almost one-fourth are communicants and Church members. They have 58 independent and self-supporting Churches, 44 of which are in charge of native ministers. They raise annually £6,000 for religious purposes, and send a fifth of their native ministers to evangelize distant heathen islands; whilst the proportion of those who can read and write is greater than in most English or American towns. So completely has the Missionary work been accomplished, that the American Board of Foreign Missions last year proposed the following resolution:—“That inasmuch as the proper work of this Board in those islands is now virtually completed, so that there remains only the duty of sustaining the few veteran Missionaries in comfort and continued usefulness till they shall enter into rest, and the name of that Mission will henceforth disappear from our annual reports, we record once more our reverent and thankful acknowledgment of the success with which God, in His providence and by His Spirit, has crowned the work of our Missionaries in that field, and by which a race of barbarians—without letters, without arts, without industry, and with no humanising institutions—has been transformed into a Christian nation, civilised and free, under government of laws, with free schools for all the children, and with the Bible in the homes of the people.” We refer the reader to Dr. Rufus Anderson’s “History of the Sandwich Islands Mission,” a trustworthy and remarkable volume.

In further illustration of this part of our subject, it may be stated that numerous native Churches in Burmah, in India (both north and south), in Polynesia, in Madagascar, and still more in the West Indies, are now entirely self-supporting; whilst a yet greater number are more or less so. This is proved by the fact that some of the older Missionary Societies now derive a considerable proportion of their income from the Churches they have planted in heathen lands.

and intelligent men and women to receive the Gospel, or at least to give it a candid hearing. The Syrian, the Persian, the Arabian, the Egyptian, the Greek, and the Armenian intellect and imagination were already familiarised with the grand and fundamental conceptions of one supreme, spiritual, and benevolent God,—of an eternal and immutable moral law,—of human responsibility,—of Divine government,—and of Divine mediation. Thus, when the first preachers of the Gospel disclosed their message in Alexandria, Antioch, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome,—and it is worthy of notice how they selected great centres of intelligence and population as their principal spheres of labour,—they found numbers prepared to listen to their message, to understand their ideas and their phraseology, and to welcome the sublime truths they taught.* Even so, a process of preparation of an analogous kind is now going on throughout almost the entire Gentile world. The most distant islands and the most alien tribes and races are now reached by Christian explorers and traders; and evil as their actions often are, the general

* Those who are of opinion that modern Missions make slow progress in comparison with those of the first and second centuries, should remember that for not less than 500 years did this leavening preparatory process go on. The triumphant position, therefore, won by Christianity at the beginning of the third century, though primarily due to the zeal and fidelity of the apostles and their successors, may fairly be described as the result of 700 years of Providential and human effort to prepare for and to establish the kingdom of God. On the other hand, nine-tenths of our modern Missions have actually been established within the lifetime of thousands now living. It is not eighty years since the first Missionaries commenced their labours in Northern India, in any part of Africa, and in Polynesia. The splendid fruitage of effort in Burmah, and in Madagascar, is due to less than fifty-five years of toil; and, properly speaking, Chinese Missions are of yet more recent date.

effect of such intercourse is undoubtedly to call attention to the religion which underlies the greatness and the civilisation of the nations they represent. The Anglo-Saxon Missionary rests his claim to be heard on the truth and importance of the religion he teaches; but he is undoubtedly, in most instances, commended to the forbearance, if not the respect of those he seeks to influence, by the fact that he is one of a race whose power, wealth, and influence are everywhere manifest. His two grand aims are—to lead individual men and women to believe and follow Christ, and to spread abroad a knowledge of the essential truths and doctrines of the Bible. He seeks to accomplish the former by means of the latter, and though he often fails in reaching the ultimate end, the proximate one is moderately sure. Printing has greatly multiplied his power, so that now—by means of the sacred Scriptures, and Christian tracts and books, and school books saturated with Christian ideas, as well as by the living voice—attention is everywhere called to Christianity as the faith of the whole civilised world, and to its grand leading doctrines,—the unity of God, the incarnation and atonement of the Saviour, the immortality of the soul, and human responsibility.

Not only has public attention throughout the semi-civilised world been thus directed, but there has been a marked modification of opinion in some directions, and a change in others, as the result. No one can be familiar with the intellectual, social, and religious state of Turkey, Syria, Egypt, Persia, India, Burmah, Japan, and China, three-quarters of a century ago (or even half that time) and now, without being struck with the

marked change. And this is all the more significant if it be remembered that these countries represent four-fifths of all the heathen world, and the only three great systems of Paganism with which Christianity has now to contend.

But direct as well as indirect good has followed Missionary effort in almost every case where it has been tried for a reasonable length of time, as the following details abundantly show.

In the WEST INDIES, the degradation, the ignorance, and the superstitions of the early part of this century have been greatly reduced. Schools and chapels have been multiplied, and they may now justly be considered as regions won from heathenism to Christianity.

Eighty years ago POLYNESIA was entirely heathen. Probably not a Christian could be found there, nor any one who could read or write. Cannibalism, human sacrifices, and infanticide were frequent. The prevailing superstitions had in them not one redeeming quality of nobleness, goodness, or beneficence; and the people were given over to fraud, falsehood, violence, and impurity. Much of this yet remains, but much also of it has been diminished, and much has totally disappeared. At least two hundred islands have embraced the faith of Christ. In these, idol-temples, and the priestcraft, superstition, and cruelty associated with them, have almost disappeared; whilst chapels, schools, and the arts and industries of Christianity and civilised life have taken their place. In about an equal number of islands the same process of evangelizing is in operation, and year by year heathenism, with its darkness, cruelty, and wretchedness, is giving place to Christianity, with

its light, beneficence, and peace. At least half a million people are now professing Christianity, and of these 60,000 are communicants and Church members; whilst not less than 2,500 are pastors of the native congregations already gathered, or Missionaries to the islands where heathenism still reigns. All this has been done at a cost of not more than a million pounds sterling—less than the price of constructing many single miles of railway in London; and so well and thoroughly has the work in numbers of instances been done, that it has ceased to be a charge on the resources of Missionary Societies, and actually supplies agents and funds for evangelistic work elsewhere.

The progress made in SOUTH AFRICA has been very great. Slavery, oppression, and bloodshed have been restrained. The wretchedness and terror identified with sorcery, witchcraft, and fetish-worship, have been lessened. Whole tribes and races have begun their march from barbarism to civilisation, from heathenism to Christianity. There are many settlements, towns, and villages where the Christian faith is professed, and its usages adopted. Missionaries, Bibles, schools, chapels, are now found from the eastern to the western coasts, to a distance of more than 1,200 miles north of Cape Town; and already upwards of a quarter of a million converts—Kaffirs, Hottentots, Bushmen, Fingoes, Bechuanas, and others have received the Gospel of Christ.

MADAGASCAR deserves special notice. It is questionable if, for the past thousand years, any more striking illustration of the unaided power of the Gospel to win its way to success, in spite of all that force, craft, and

malice could do to hinder it, has anywhere been seen. It is only fifty-two years since the work commenced, and the feebleness of its first beginnings may be inferred from the fact that one solitary Missionary, with only three scholars, commenced that school-work which subsequently became so potent. For less than eleven years the Missionaries laboured without hindrance, but their number never exceeded eleven, most of them being artisans. Then came a long dark period of obstruction and persecution. From July, 1836, to August, 1862, no Missionary was allowed to labour in the island; and for as long a period all attempts to propagate Christianity were sternly repressed, and its profession prohibited by fine, imprisonment, and death. Yet it spread, even in the darkest times; and now the national idols have been destroyed, the monarch is a devout Christian, the capital is well supplied with chapels, and the Sabbath is as well kept there as in many English towns. Far into the country around the Gospel has also penetrated, and there are hundreds of thousands ready to "cast their idols to the moles and to the bats;" whilst already 300,000 people have been baptised, of whom 38,000 are communicants and Church members. Such is the wish to hear and to learn, that the Missionaries have gradually increased the number of native assistants to 2,557, whilst copies of the Scriptures and school books have been required as fast as they could be printed. All this has been done by the Bible and the Missionaries alone, at a total cost of less than £150,000.*

Real progress has been made in some parts of the

* See Ellis's "Martyr Church of Madagascar."

TURKISH EMPIRE. Attention has largely been called towards Christianity by the presence of Missionaries and the wide circulation of the Scriptures and other books, as well as by the growing intercourse with Christian nations. The bigotry of Islamism has given way so far, that proselytism is allowed, and converts suffer no grievous wrong. There are now more than 20,000 such ; and through the various Mission schools, liberal, enlightened, and true ideas are being widely spread.

INDIA, the seat of the oldest superstition now known, and the magnificent trophy of England's power and greatness, demands special notice. No one in the least acquainted with Hindus and Hinduism will deny that extraordinary difficulties lie in the way of converting the former and subverting the latter.

The first Protestant Missionaries reached India in 1706, but up to the close of the century there were never twelve Missionaries there at any one time, and the labours of these were confined to a very small portion of the empire. In the first twenty-five years of this century the average number of Missionaries was under 100 ; and during the past half century it has not reached 400,—or one to every half million of the population. Thus it is clear that the labourers have been indeed few, and the time during which they have laboured has been short.

But marked progress has been made alike in the changes which Hinduism has undergone, and in the conversion of individuals to a purer faith. Suttee has been abolished. Infanticide has been greatly abated. Female education is spreading. The condition of women is much ameliorated. Widows are

being treated with more humanity, and their marriages are becoming frequent. The more inhuman and indecent exhibitions of idolatry are disappearing. The great religious festivals are seldom attended by the large and enthusiastic crowds of former days. Caste is losing its strange, strong, fascinating power.* The authority of the Shasters is being discredited, and the impression is everywhere abroad that the Hinduism of the past is ready to vanish away. New ideas and conceptions also are already taking shape in the minds of multitudes who, from their rank and intelligence, have most influence in shaping the opinions of others. Thus, the belief of the uneducated in a multitude of hideous and licentious gods and goddesses, and of the learned and intellectual in Pantheism, or in Brum, the soul of the universe, the impersonation of supreme and selfish blissful repose, is giving place to the belief in one God, infinitely wise, just, pure, benevolent, holy, and active, not easily distinguishable from the Jehovah of the Old Testament. The hitherto universal belief in the transmigration of the soul, with all its fatalistic and demoralising effects, is giving place to Christian conceptions of the individuality, dignity, and responsibility of man. And with all this, true moral ideas are likewise spreading. Through the wise and careful policy of government and the administration of just and equal laws, through commercial intercourse, by means of government schools and colleges, and still

* "That in eating there should be no prejudices, even Hindus are beginning to admit as an axiomatic truth and the prejudice against beef and wine, as forbidden articles of food; are now confined only among bigots of the orthodox class."—*Essays by Babu Shoshi Chunder Dutt.* p. 38. This statement must be limited to the educated classes in the large cities.

more through direct Christian teaching, new and correct conceptions of truthfulness, honesty, right, and benevolence, of the brotherhood of mankind, and the claims of all to equal justice and good-will, and of human responsibility to God, are taking root in myriads of minds and hearts. And those who have the slightest acquaintance with the excessive demoralisation of Hindu society, and the utterly false and impure influence of Hinduism as a popular religion, will best be able to estimate the importance and value of such changes.*

But whilst the old superstition is thus undergoing a process of rapid and thorough disintegration, the faith which the Missionaries have planted is steadily gathering strength and influence. Every decade of this century has witnessed a marked advance in the number or quality of the converts; in the fresh ground that has been occupied; or in the strength of the Indian Church, through its growing intelligence, its enlarged liberality, and the higher type of its indigenous ministry. Indian Missions can show their quarter

* Ample proofs and illustrations of all these statements could readily be given. We cite but two writers, neither of whom can be suspected of partiality.

"The middle and upper strata of Hindu society, under the direct propagandism of Missions and the moderate results of our rule, are seething with new ideas, desires, and beliefs, and present a study full of significance to the philanthropist and scientific observer."—*The Calcutta Correspondent of "The Times."*

"To borrow a simile from Lord Macaulay, the seven sleepers of the legend, who closed their eyes when the Pagans were persecuting the Christians, and awoke when the Christians were persecuting the Pagans, did not find themselves in a world more completely new than what about fifty years hence, at the present rate of progress, will be the moral and intellectual aspect of British India."—*Essays by Babu Shosi Chunder Dutt.* pp. 39, 40.

of a million converts, and their two thousand teachers and preachers; and among the former it can point to numbers of self-supporting churches, and a state of growing prosperity nowhere else equalled among the multitudinous races and sects of our splendid Eastern empire; whilst among the latter it has a large and growing number of men who for piety, eloquence, intellectual acumen, and attainments, would compare favourably with the ministry of Christian lands.

The BURMESE MISSIONS, being almost solely conducted by the American Baptists, are not as well known in England as they should be. They have always had a small staff of Missionaries, seldom numbering twenty. The Mission was commenced in 1813, and for some years its work was impeded by war, persecution, and political jealousy. In spite of these, nevertheless, a Christian literature has been created;—some remarkable conversions have taken place;—100,000 Karens have received the gospel;—the churches into which they have been gathered are chiefly self-supporting, and have their native pastors;—whilst a considerable number of their members are zealous and efficient evangelists to their unenlightened countrymen*

* In one Association with 50 native teachers, no aid for their support has been received from abroad for some time. The Karen Christians in one year sent out and supported 13 of their number as Missionaries to their countrymen. One Association of Churches which recently had only 6,169 church members, in 59 churches with 58 pastors, had also 50 licentiates and 52 students for the Ministry in the Seminary. This exhibits a condition of things very analogous to that found in the Sandwich Islands; which we see contributing 30,000 dollars for various objects of Christian benevolence, besides 6,000 dollars to send the gospel to the heathen islands and regions elsewhere.

See the "Gospel in Burmah," by Mrs. Wylie.

Though the first Protestant Missionary to CHINA was sent in 1807, it has only been during the past thirty years that the present staff of about one hundred and twenty Missionaries has been sustained—a number totally inadequate to the spiritual claims of one-third of the human race, and which gives but one Missionary to three millions six hundred thousand persons, or less than one to a population larger than that of Scotland. The number of converts baptised falls short of twenty thousand; but Missionary labour has told powerfully in other directions. The sacred Scriptures have been given to the people, whilst numerous scientific and literary works have been translated into Chinese, together with many Christian treatises and tracts.

The learned classes of the Empire have had their attention drawn to the doctrines and principles of Christianity; and the incidents of the Taiping rebellion, as well as the hostility recently exhibited in various quarters toward Christian propagandism, prove how much they apprehend its growing power.

In SIAM and JAPAN a few Missionaries, chiefly from America, are laying broad and deep the foundations of the future Christian Church; and the recent declaration of the Japanese Government, that they are preparing to establish a new form of religion throughout the empire, shows how little hold, as a faith, Buddhism has on the people, and how much more than is usually supposed they have become influenced by extraneous opinions.

Of the INDIAN ARCHIPELAGO we know far too little, but we have sufficient evidence to prove that here and there the Dutch Missionaries and Ministers are

labouring with commendable zeal, and reaping adequate success.*

The history of NEW ZEALAND Missions is dark and melancholy in the main, and is relieved only by few and partial rays of comfort. Begun by the Church Missionary Society in 1814, and subsequently by the Wesleyans in 1822, they gave promise of gratifying success; for the former could tell of numerous native pastors, of large contributions, and of five thousand five hundred communicants;† whilst the latter could tell of thirteen thousand six hundred and twenty-two attendants on public worship. But the recent wars have dissipated much of this promise, and demoralised a large portion of the population, preparing the way for

* “The Missionaries, however, have much to be proud of in this country. They have assisted the Government in changing a savage into a civilised community in a wonderfully short space of time. Forty years ago the country was a wilderness, the people naked savages, garnishing their rude houses with human heads. Now it is a garden worthy of its sweet native name of “Minakasa.” Good roads and paths traverse it in every direction; some of the finest coffee plantations in the world surround the villages, interspersed with extensive rice-fields, more than sufficient for the support of the population. The people are now the most industrious, peaceable, and civilised in the whole Archipelago. They are the best clothed, the best housed, the best fed, and the best educated; and they have made some progress towards a higher social state. I believe there is no example elsewhere of such striking results being produced in so short a time—results which are entirely due to the system of government now adopted by the Dutch in their Eastern possessions.”—“*The Malay Archipelago*,” by Wallace. Vol. i. p. 253.

† A large portion of the district is worked entirely by native pastors, and it is no longer an experiment whether this principle will answer. It is so acceptable to the natives that they are anxious to have the number of their pastors increased, and are willing to contribute to their support. The sum already raised amounts to £750, and is still going on, though to effect this they have exercised much self-denial, and have left but a small portion of their wheat for the purchase of clothes.

a new form of fanaticism which threatens the overthrow of all that is sacred and virtuous.

The Missions in the extreme NORTH OF EUROPE are relatively of little importance, but they have served to exhibit in a marked degree the heroism of the Missionary character, and the triumphs of the gospel over obstacles of a peculiarly trying nature. Esquimaux, Lapps, and Greenlanders have all felt the elevating power of Christian truth; and whilst their barbarous manners and customs have been softened, not a few have given clear evidence of a divine change. These solitary desolate regions may now indeed be regarded as lands won to the kingdom of God. A Missionary who has spent forty years of toil in Greenland, recently wrote:—"In all Greenland there is but one station in the neighbourhood of which there are heathen. With this exception, all the Greenlanders now profess Christianity."

The corresponding regions of NORTH AMERICA are steadily opening to the light of the gospel. This vast but thinly populated country, part of which belongs to the United States, part to England, and part of which is independent territory, is the field in which four British and some American Societies now labour. A fair amount of success has crowned their toils. In the localities where the people lead settled lives, churches have usually been built, congregations have been gathered, and schools established. Even the nomadic tribes have come beneath the influence of Christianity. It may be that the aborigines scattered throughout this wild and sterile region are destined to extinction; but it is some satisfaction to reflect that they have at length

been reached by the gospel, which, if it do not rescue them from ethnic destruction, will at least convey to individuals among them the great gift of eternal life.

Thus the disciples of the Saviour have gone into all the world accessible to them, and in every place where their labours have been carried on for a reasonable length of time, a blessing more or less rich has borne witness to the approval of God; and African, Polynesian, American, and Asiatic missionaries, labouring among a hundred tribes and races, have each been able to say, "Now, thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place."*

But the inquiry naturally arises, Does all this represent any real change in the hearts, feelings, and opinions of the converts? Is it merely outward,—the effect of fear, or self-interest, or a love of change and excitement? Or is it, at least in a fair number of instances, the result of intelligent conviction and choice on the part of the individuals, and of the Divine influence operating to enlighten, reform, and save? There may be much of the former, but assuredly there is also much of the latter. Nor should the indirect result of Missionary effort be either depreciated or overlooked. And equally it is unreasonable to expect that the good accomplished will be unmixed and complete. When and where has it been found so? What Christian is there, however saintly, who has received and expressed all that his religion can give to him? What preacher of the truth, or what faithful pastor, accomplishes all the good he desires? Does not defect,

* 2 Cor. ii. 14.

limitation, and comparative failure characterise all human efforts to bring individuals, churches, families, and communities to their ideal state of perfectness, even when they are favoured with the blessing of the Divine Spirit? We see, indeed, that even under the most favourable circumstances, human nature is very slowly reformed, improved, and elevated; and if this be so with the work of the social reformer, the philanthropist, and the Christian teacher in England, it is to be expected that the difficulties in the way of the Missionary in a heathen land will be far greater. We write not thus to ward off inquiry, but simply because truth and justice demand that it should be remembered. There are no evidences of success in attempts to civilise races, to destroy evil customs and superstitions, to introduce new and elevating principles and habits, to reform individual lives, to bring men into right relations with God, and to fit them for a future life, which modern Missions cannot exhibit, and that too in numberless instances.

Cruel and barbarous customs have been abolished.—India, the West Indies, and Polynesia afford numerous proofs of this. In the latter region Missionary agency may claim the sole glory of whatever has been done; and if in the two former other causes have been operating for good, it alone can claim the honour of a bold, unvarying protest against suttee, human sacrifices, infanticide, and slavery.

In other instances such practices have been abated and are gradually passing away.—The savage and bloody disregard of human life and right, prevalent throughout Western Africa, with the dreaded power of the sorcerer and

rain-maker in its Southern and Central regions; the dark and demoralising midnight orgies of the West Indies; the bloody and licentious festivities of Polynesia; and the cruel, heartless, and unjust usages of Hindu society, which, in the days of our fathers, wrought misery and degradation, unchallenged, like the small-pox in a savage tribe, are now things of which men are beginning to be ashamed.

In place of these, Christian ideas of morality are beginning to prevail.—It constitutes a fatal indictment against all forms of polytheism, that they either encourage or are powerless to repress such forms of evil as fraud, falsehood, and impurity; and these prevail everywhere unchecked, save by fear. It is unnecessary to state that Missionaries invariably protest against these, though their own countrymen, alas! too frequently do not, except when they themselves are wronged. And the protest is not in vain. Two facts will show this. The Hindus educated in Mission Schools throughout our Indian empire are morally far superior to any other class, save the best of the Christian converts. Turning to quite a different race, it would be easy to cite the testimony of numerous witnesses, affirming that in those islands of the Pacific where Christianity prevails, a markedly improved moral tone is perceptible; and that such islands most favourably contrast with others yet in heathenism. The word, the honesty, and the honour of the Christian can be relied on; and in numerous instances the islanders are far more likely to suffer wrong and injury by intercourse than are their white visitors. “*The Earl and the Doctor*,” in the recently published work,

“South Sea Bubbles,” though having a strong bias against evangelical effort and evangelical opinion, as we understand it, incontinently make certain admissions which to us are of considerable value. The worst they say of Missionaries is, that they are too strict and rigid in checking many of the old customs and in enforcing new ones; that they make too many native preachers; that they persuade the converts to give too liberally to the Missionary Societies; and that the Protestant and the Catholic—especially the latter—deal unfairly with each other, and to the great detriment of their common object, by invading each other’s spheres of labour. They acknowledge that barbarous customs have disappeared; only they affirm that the reformation of manners is but superficial, for that underneath the improved exterior the old love of revelry and of license still exists, and not seldom is secretly indulged. There is probably much truth in this, but the writers themselves evidently never looked beneath the surface of the religious profession, to ascertain how far there was proof of the power of religion as a divine influence. After visiting several of what may now be called Christian islands, they happened to be wrecked on a small uninhabited one, near to which were some others reported to be peopled by cannibals, and they thus moralise on the event:—

“It is rather provoking to think that we are within sixty miles of islands flowing with milk and honey, and yet dare not go near them. If we had been lucky enough to get wrecked on the Society, Cook’s Island, or Samoas, we should have been half killed with kindness, and made little gods of; whereas now we

pray fervently that no one may see the wreck and find us out."

Further on they add: "The London Mission has certainly had great success. At the Society, Cook's Island, &c., the islanders are for the most part nominal Christians, and although their sexual morality be very lax, their honesty, bravery, and general good feeling would compare very favourably with European races. They are lazy—but why should they not be? They are very well off without working, and wise enough to be contented. When one mixes with such generous, kind-hearted people, gentle without cowardice—gentle but not fearful—courteous without humbug—it is difficult to imagine that so few years ago they could have been disgraced—some by human sacrifice, others by actual cannibalism; and when one remarks how infinitely the virtue of common honesty has progressed since Cook's time, let us pay all honour to the Missionaries, if they have wrought the change."

It cannot be denied that education has received a wonderful impetus from the labours of Missionaries.—In some instances when their labours commenced, they found that ignorance was universal—as in Polynesia, Africa, and Madagascar; in others, that instruction was, as a policy, denied to those they sought to elevate—as in the West Indies, among the lowest castes and outcasts of the Southern Provinces and among the 100,000,000 women of India; and in others that it was confined very closely to a class—as in China, Burmah, India generally, and the realms of Islamism. Wherever the Missionaries have gone, the establishment of schools has early had their attention. To them it is owing

that now there are myriads of readers in Polynesia, and numerous islands where education is as general as in England ;—that in Madagascar so great a thirst for instruction exists, that schools and school books cannot be supplied in adequate numbers ;—that Chinese education has been modified ;—that the right of the Shoodra to education equally with the Brahmin and the Vaisya has been conceded ;—that the prison doors of the Zenana have been opened, and the *purdah* drawn aside ;—that Hindu women, kept from knowledge for many centuries, may now receive it ;—and that our Western ideas of religion, science, and social life are beginning to spread through the regions around Palestine. The education of the world has received a more powerful impetus from Missionaries than from statesmen, from philosophers, or from philanthropists.

But results far more durable and precious than any of these have been produced, of which it becomes us to speak with mingled gratitude, reverence, and joy.

The grand and ultimate aim of all purely Christian effort is to impart to men that priceless gift of eternal life, of which our Lord and Saviour so often spoke.—How far this has been accomplished cannot be known in our present limited sphere of existence. But, taking the truths of the New Testament as our standard, and judging of how far they have been believed, by the testimony of those who have received them, and the evidence they afford by lives of patient and strenuous effort to overcome evil, to become better and holier, and to serve and honour God, we are justified in believing that there are many myriads now in heathen lands, where formerly there were none, who are Christians by reason of a divine

change, and who are on their way to join the great company of the blessed in heaven. Each of our great Missionary Societies has many thousand adherents of whom these things may be affirmed. There are few congregations gathered from among the heathen where there are not many such; and we have personally met with scores of Missionaries who could affirm these things of numbers, and confirm them by the amplest and most satisfactory evidence.

It becomes us to speak yet more reverently of *the evidences of renewal and hope exhibited by converts at the close of life*.—We attach no undue importance to death-bed scenes and final utterances, but rightly understood and justly analysed they are most significant. The irreligious may meet death calmly or carelessly; they often greatly dread it; but they never meet it joyfully and triumphantly. The true Christian, on the other hand, never dies in terror, but often with peaceful trust and hope, as if sustained by more than human conceptions; and not seldom do his emotions in that dread and testing hour partake of the joyful and the exultant. This test, if applied to converts from any form of heathenism, presents very marked results. Spurious religions can do nothing better for their adherents than to nerve them to meet stoically their stern and inexorable destiny. Islamism inspires the most ardent of its disciples with a hope which vanquishes all human fear; yet we have never heard of a heathen man dying joyfully. But *converts* from heathenism often do. We have often been surprised at the uniform fidelity and hope of such in life's last hours. We have wondered that the old dread of malignant deities has not then

more frequently returned, and a terrible fear seized the soul that in having left the ancestral faith it had made a grave mistake. This does not happen — we never heard of it happening. But we have read and heard of multitudes of instances where thankfulness was expressed that the change of faith had been made ; where a peaceful trust sustained the dying ; where the hope of a better life triumphed over pain and sorrow and bereavement ; and where calm, deliberate, and exultant utterances gave evidence of the presence and blessing of God. “How good it is to die as a Christian !” was one of the last expressions of a Hindu convert very dear to the writer, who, after a too brief but most exemplary life, passed away with a calmness, trustfulness, and joy, which astonished and moved all who witnessed it. We recently heard a most reliable Missionary, who has laboured many years in Polynesia, speak of the “tens of thousands” who there had passed away, leaving in the minds of those who knew them well, the joyful assurance or the restful hope that they had gone to form part of the redeemed family of God in heaven. And respecting all the great fields of labour similar testimony is given.

Thus we have given a large number of facts, which are worthy the attention of all who care for the elevation and improvement of the human race. They prove how real, deep, and varied the influence of Missions is. They justify all that has been attempted for the evangelisation of the heathen, and encourage us to fresh effort.

We especially invite Christian ministers and laymen, who are for various reasons indifferent to Missions, or

sceptical as to their value, to ponder over these facts. Mission work abroad will bear looking at. It is often treated, not only by the irreligious, but by great numbers of devout persons, with a suspiciousness and coldness which cannot be justified. If there is cause for these, by all means let it be stated. We challenge investigation. We dare to affirm that modern Missions will bear comparison, as to reasonableness, economy, and results, with any work undertaken anywhere by social reformers, philanthropists, or ministers of Christ.*

* See "A Manual of Missionary Facts and Principles." By Edw. Storow.

CHAPTER VIII.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE REVIVAL OF MISSIONARY EFFORT IN THE CHURCH.

Illustration of principles.—The Revival Partial.—Want of Personal Engagement, and of an Exercised Conscience.—Excitement.—Decision.—Appeals to Christians.—Divisions of the Church.—Advantages.—Means of Union.—Personal Sacrifices.—Value of Existing Institutions.—Questions as to the Duty of the Church as such.—Duty of Individuals, and of Societies.—Prospects.

THE Revival of Missionary Enterprise has now been traced, so as to present in one outline view the exertions to which that revival has been stimulating the Church of Christ. The foregoing sketch has been drawn, not as a full history of the spread of the gospel, but with the hope of establishing on the facts exhibited some further illustrations of the principles of the Missionary Church. THE CHURCH IS A MISSIONARY INSTITUTION. Its vital powers are expansive. Its laws and sanctions are incitements to efforts for enlargement. Its prosperity has risen, fallen, and revived, with the spirit of Missions. These are facts. They are in accordance with the revealed constitution of the Church.

The following observations are such as must often occur to those who *think* on the subject of Christian Missions.

The Revival of Missionary enterprise in the Christian

Church is, as yet, but *partial*.—When we compare the efforts made both in Europe and in America, during the last eighty years, with the apathy which was so general before, we must rejoice in the improvement which has taken place. It is an improvement. It indicates, so far as it reaches, a return to larger views and deeper convictions of the duties of the Church. It is an evidence of greater individual attention, in many quarters, to the state of the world, to the character of the gospel, to the demands of the Saviour, and to the obligations of Christians. It is, unquestionably, the result of an effusion on the minds of men of that spirit without which the Church cannot prosper.

Yet this revived spirit is *partial*. It has not, up to the present time, pervaded the Church as in her best days. It has not secured the attention of Christians individually, coming home to their bosoms as an integral part of their personal *engagements*. It has not yet obtained that consecration of personal interests, anxieties, prayers, sacrifices, and efforts, which enlightened Missionary principles demand. These principles have not yet received the homage of Christian understandings. They are not yet heartily embraced. They do not now grasp and direct men's consciences. Many are willing to attend a Missionary anniversary: whilst listening to touching narrations of misery, they pity; whilst addressed in strains of commanding eloquence, they feel; whilst urged by the appeals of earnestness or the incitements of example, they give their money to the Missionary work. But, of these, how many are there who *first* give their own selves

unto the Lord? How many are there who consider their own relation to their heathen brethren? How many are there who *think*, seriously, cogently, and honestly, of the consequences resulting from their own possession of that gospel which Christ commanded them to send to the heathen? How many are there who would pursue active measures for the sending of the gospel to the heathen—independently of public meetings and periodical excitements? It is painful to consider, after all that has been said, written, and done, by men and women truly alive to this grandest of objects, how very small is the amount of information respecting it even among intelligent Christians. The spiritual condition of a world where every man is a brother, every woman a sister, is little known! It might be known. Materials are in abundance. Alas! there is not yet a general disposition to seek such knowledge. There is more anxiety to be acquainted with the landscape by which our perishing brethren are surrounded, the language they speak, their dress, dwellings, and manners, their wars, their history, than there is to know the character they are forming, and the kind of preparation they are making for the day when we shall meet them face to face at the tribunal of our common Lord!

We want an *exercised conscience* in this matter. We shudder at the thought of being accessory to a gross act of impiety, or inhumanity, or injustice, to a large body of our fellow men. "Herein" we ought to "exercise" ourselves, "to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."* It is

* Acts xxiv. 16.

our duty towards God our Saviour to make the gospel known. If we are not concerned to fulfil this duty, our conscience is clouded by error, lulled by delusion ; or else we are biassed against our conscience by the selfish indolence of inclinations in the heart. It is our duty to man, in all regions and in all circumstances, to convey to him the message of peace which we have received, not for ourselves only, but also for him. In this matter there is no option. From this obligation there is no discharge. We are *bound* to do this thing. We hold the gospel on these terms. We are amenable both to man and to God. Under the power and sanction of this obligation we are going to our account. Oh, let every Christian see that his conscience is neither deceived nor neglected !

The *excitement* which has been felt in connection with Missions has been imagined to be great, even extravagant. It will be confessed that the objects brought before the mind, whenever the Missionary enterprise is rightly presented, are of a nature to stir up the deepest emotions. He is little to be envied, or even esteemed, who can contemplate idolatry in its insult of God, in its debasement of man, in the vices it engenders and the miseries it inflicts—without excitement. Feeble indeed is the love of Christ in that man's heart, who can reflect on the woes on earth foreshadowing the destruction and loss which crowd upon the destinies of nations without Christ, and yet not be excited ! What ! Is there nothing to excite in the spectacles of guilt, degradation, wretchedness, and despair ? Nothing to excite in the assurance that this guilt may be cancelled—this wretchedness relieved, this despair sup-

planted by hope? Is there nothing exciting in the consciousness that the means of blessing all our fellow sinners throughout the world are in our hands, placed there for this very purpose? Is there nothing exciting in the remembrance that we have not done our duty in the faithful and devout application of these means? Is there nothing exciting in the grand conceptions given us in prophecy of what our world will become when it more truly loves and obeys God? There ought to be excitement. There must be more excitement. What we desire is the excitement that is felt in the thoughtful study of the Scriptures, and on our bended knees in secret. We want the excitement which is kindled by conscience and fanned by reflection. We want the excitement which is not fitful, but constant; not dependent on the breath of popular eloquence and crowded assemblies, but deep in the recesses of the heart, growing with the enlargement of our knowledge, pervading the elements of our character—the beating of the heart, the breathing of the spirit, the “divine nature” working in us mightily! This is the healthy excitement of life guided by the light of truth, maintained by strength of principle, and exhibiting the glow of feeling in the constancy of exertion and in the earnestness of prayer.

In the Missionary work we have not yet attained to that *high tone of decision* which comports with the sacredness of our authority and with the dignity of our aim. There is a controversy in the world between the error which destroys and the truth which saves. These two are utterly hostile: the one manifesting itself as the destroyer of man, cursing him with the

fellowship of his own iniquity—the other revealing to him the Saviour of man ready to bless him with the fellowship of His own felicity. The adherents of error, whether conscious or unconscious of the work they do, are sufficiently explicit in their movements. They scruple not to deride the fanaticism of meddling with the religion of the people of other regions. Their opinions are freely uttered and widely circulated. They are *resigned* to the fate of their brethren. They offer no struggle against the wasting dominion of sin. No zeal have they for the honour of God. They profess not to be constrained by the love of Christ. They tremble not at the mandate of Him who “both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and living.”* They have taken their side. They must therefore abide the issue. Their choice is made. The end is coming. The day shall declare it.

But—“who is on the Lord’s side?”—How stands this matter with professing Christians? What *is* their profession? They profess that they love Christ. They profess that they have been translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. They profess that they are concerned for the honour of their Saviour, and for the salvation of their fellow men. Before the period of Missionary revival, such profession, however sincerely made, had few opportunities of being tested. But in these days, every man must take his ground. We are brought into the “Valley of Decision.” The banners are unfurled—trumpets are pealing—the field is covered with the host panting for the fight. Will the soldiers of the Cross desert their Leader? Will

* Rom. xiv. 9.

they disgrace their standard? The time for timid profession is gone. Now—secrecy is alienation, silence is treason.—“He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad.”* If the Missionary work is an error, let it be exploded. If it is a romantic “passion for saving souls,” let it be considered what that means. If it be a mischievous intrusion on the wholesome prejudices nursed by the wisdom of the ancients, and cherished by the tenderness of power, let it be unmasked. If it be a waste of money, let it be proved and exposed. If it be a failure, let it be openly shown to be one, and let not its detractors deal so much in vague insinuation. If it detract from the amount and value of work needing to be done at home, let such be clearly proved. But, oh! let “the Church of the Lord which He hath purchased with His own blood” be faithful in her day. Let every man who believes the gospel be “valiant for the truth upon the earth.” Individually, let us take a simpler, higher, more apostolic tone. Collectively, let us put on the armour of light. Let us abandon all petty views. Let us abjure all timid policy. Let the question of Christian Missions in our minds be decided. Let us “settle it in our hearts”—that *this* is an elementary and essential part of Christianity. Let us rise higher than expediency, however wise. Let us go beyond compassion for our fellow-men, however tender and enlightened. Let us not be content to follow examples, however laudable and winning. Let us be fixed firmly in our principles. Let us be earnestly devoted to our objects. Let us be A MISSIONARY CHURCH. It must

* Matt. xii. 30.

become *the* business of our life, that to which all other business is secondary and subordinate. We are, in the largest sense, to “seek FIRST the kingdom of God.”* The character we sustain as private Christians is that of the Lord’s appointed agents in the diffusion of His gospel. The object for which we are associated in the “fellowship” of the Church, is to make the “word of the Lord sound out” into the regions beyond us.—It is clear that we do still want, in the Christian Church, a higher tone, a firmer principle, a grander conception, a more resolute position, and more vital energy of action, in the great work committed to us.

The revival of the Missionary spirit has yet to produce a more full and hearty co-operation in the Church of Christ. The Church is one—Catholic. The Missionary Institution, which *is* the Church, is therefore one. Whatever benefits may arise from the existing divisions of the Church under different names, and with conflicting opinions, it might occur to us oftener than it seems to do, that “in the beginning it was not so,” and that it will not be so in the end.

Doubtless, advantages arise from our separations. There is greater freedom both of thought and of action than there was in the olden days of uniformity. There is more concentration on specific points of truth. There is more activity, much of which springs from rivalry and emulation. In proportion to the enlarged effusions of the Missionary spirit, we have been brought nearer to each other. We have learned to respect the conscientious peculiarities by which we were severed. The fierceness of controversy hath been

* Matt. vi. 33.

much allayed. Perhaps the measures we have been pursuing have done little to settle disputes in the way of argumentative discussion. But they have done what is better. They have been gradually raising us to a height, from which many of us can look down on the manly controversies of our fathers without passion. We venerate the principles for which they contended. We admire the learning, the skill, the wit, and sometimes the temper, in which they wielded their giant strength. We do not sit in judgment on these mighty champions. They did the work of their day. We are to do the work of our day.

We are thankful that on all the essential principles of the gospel we find all the parties *in the Church* substantially agreed. This agreement is felt. There is an invisible unity. If ever there shall be a visible union of all the faithful—and why should we doubt of this?—that union will not be effected by forms and creeds, but by active and consentaneous effort in the spreading of our common faith.

On this basis, to this extent, we must have more mutual confidence than has yet been witnessed. We need no compromise of any of our own principles, nor expectation of such compromise from others. There will be—and the sooner the better for all parties in the Church and for the world in general—there will be an anxiety to *ascertain* how near we are to each other in reality, how much there is of essential unity beneath the surface of our technical diversities; and this being ascertained, there will be, there ought to be, an explicit acknowledgment of error in our former jealousies, and a hearty demonstration of our good-will to one another

as the servants of one Lord. Our co-operation must be the result of a uniform conviction that we have one end in view. That end must be realised to our apprehensions as transcendently important. And along with this conviction we must be fully alive to that which is a fact, whether we be fully alive to it or not,—the principles we all maintain are such as to urge us to the attainment of our common end. We all feel that it is our duty to send the gospel to the ends of the earth. The gospel which we all send is preached, by those who go, in such wise as to exhibit to the heathen the great doctrines in which we all agree. They mostly do not,—pity it is that any should be so weak,—they do not press on the attention of the heathen the controversies of the Church, but the well-understood “revelations of the Lord” to which the whole Church consents. Already, then, there are amongst us the rudiments of a solid and effective union. What we are still wanting is the gathering of these rudiments, by the attraction of some central and harmonising principle. Thus much has the providence of Christ already taught us as a thing that ought to be and may be. The Spirit of Christ is stirring up within us a desire that this union may be realised, and that it may be seen. It will be realised. It will be seen. Amidst the rapids of society, a silent but deep and mighty stream has set in, bearing the hearts of the faithful towards each other. Where is the friend of Christ that *would*, where is the enemy of Christ that *can*, roll back that stream?

A more copious effusion of the Missionary spirit on the Church will produce a most valuable effect on the minds of Christians respecting *personal sacrifices*, both

of pecuniary advantage and of local attachments, for the accomplishment of the end proposed. Examples are not wanting either to illustrate our meaning or to enforce our argument. The *denial of self* belongs to Christianity. Our Lord demands it. Our happiness, as well as our duty, requires it. It is our first lesson in the experience of religion. It is, also, a lesson we are learning all along. It is never so well understood as on the bed of death. The public organs of Missionary excitement have made us all familiar with numberless calculations and comparisons which present, in truth, a mortifying proof of the low state in which the spirit of Missions still languishes even in the best portions of the Church. And—*is it true*, that real Christians love their luxuries more than the souls of men? *Is it true*, that real Christians are too strongly spell-bound by the charms of home to think of listening to the voice of duty, to entertain any course of reflections or appeals that might by possibility call them away from their endearments? Oh, let them ponder, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”* This is the law of Christ. These are the terms of discipleship. The law is universal. The terms are perpetual. To this law the attention of the Church has long been called. That attention is but feebly awakened, and within but a limited extent. We are hoping for better things. Facts, principles, reasonings, the private convictions of individuals, and the public acknowledgments of the ministers of Christ — all support the declaration that better things are needed.

* Luke ix. 23.

We must have recourse to private, heart-searching, and wrestling prayer. When we have felt our need of the *Spirit* of Christ, and have asked for the gift, believing the promise of our Heavenly Father, who *will* give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him ; then we shall find a simplicity in our views, a force in our convictions, which will supersede the arguments and persuasions which before were unavailing because our hearts were closed against them.

Let it not be supposed, because we regard the present state of Missionary movement as partial and defective, that we undervalue what has been done, or what may be now in progress. Indeed we are disposed to prize very highly the existing Missionary institutions. By means of them, a very large amount of benefit has enriched the Christian Church. By them the Missionary thoughts, talents, gifts, prayers, and intelligence have been elicited for reviving and carrying on the work. They have been instrumental both in pressing the work on Christians at home, and in aiding its extension abroad. These institutions have attracted, so far as we know, nearly all the minds in Christendom that care for the spread of the gospel through the world. They have *created a new literature*. They have cultivated a mode of popular address, the practical value of which, to all the purposes of the Christian ministry, has not, we think, been fully appreciated. They have excited an interest in Missions unknown through many previous ages. They have infused a liveliness and energy, greatly wanted, into the proceedings of numerous Christian churches. They have shown the Church her duty. They have called her forth. They have urged

her. They have done, as the *proxies* of the Church, that which the whole Church ought to have done, and ought now to be doing herself. They have introduced the gospel into many regions which but for them had remained in all the darkness and woes of heathenism. They have "attended to the neglected, and remembered the forgotten." They have, in a great measure, conquered public opinion. They have silenced a gainsaying world. They have roused a slumbering Church.

A comprehensive survey, or, if we might hazard the expression, a *philosophical* survey of Missionary institutions would open a wide field of manly discussion and Christian contemplation. It is beneath our own understandings, as well as unfair to these institutions themselves, to be always regarding them either in a financial view, or with a mere reference to the foreign results of their activity. It could be shown that they have been closely connected with the improved simplicity and vigour of our doctrinal theology, rescuing it from the dryness of scholastic disputation, and the distortions of Antinomian phrenzy, from the coldness of Socinian unbelief, and from the absurdity of fanatical pretensions. It could be shown that these institutions have brought us nearer than we were before to the beautiful harmony and healthy tone of Christian morals. They have shed the light of the Gospel on both the tables of the Law. They have taught us most impressively, that the fulfilling of the law is—Love. They have reiterated the solemn lesson, that "*all* our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength," are to be consecrated to the Lord. They have held up the mirror

of truth ; and whilst men and women of many climes have passed before us, all speeding to the eternal state in which the gospel alone can assure them of felicity, *they* have said to us, “These are your neighbours ; if you love them as you love yourselves, send them the gospel which has taught you how to die.” It could be shown that Missionary institutions have done much to call attention to a matter unhappily still too much neglected—the oneness of the Church of Christ—by making us feel that this oneness does exist in principle ; by inclining us to desire that it should stand forth before the world in living demonstration ; and by giving us to see that such a demonstration is much more practicable, and much nearer at hand, than those who stand aloof from such engagements can possibly conceive. It could be shown that Missionary institutions for sending out the gospel to distant lands have strengthened instead of weakening all the interests of the gospel amongst ourselves. Those ministers of the gospel have been most blessed in the conversion of sinners, who have *cared* most for the general salvation of their kind. Those Christian churches have flourished most which have been most active in the Missionary work. Those parts of our own country, in which the universal spread of the gospel has been most strenuously pursued, are the parts in which the greatest amount of successful effort is carried on for the spiritual welfare of immediate neighbours. And let Britain, as we see her in our fatherland, or as we hear her voice re-echoed from beyond the Western waters, bear witness to the nations of the earth, of the influence of Foreign Missions on the Missions that

pervade our colonies, our states, counties, cities and villages at home. They are sympathetic movements of the same vital energy. They are the diversified operations of one Spirit.

He who calmly thinks of these and many other blessings which have followed in the wake of our Missionary institutions, will be very slow in forming, and slower still in propagating, any opinions that might tend to injure or embarrass them. In the comparison of one institution with another, men must exercise their own judgments, and make their choice. All of them have been honoured of God. All have contributed to the general results. They ought to be supported. And they ought to be watched. They are conducted by men. The direction of them involves great responsibility both to God and to His Church. Under God, their work is *committed* to them by the Church. Have their principles been at all times sufficiently defined? Are their plans at all times judicious? Have their arrangements for the supply of means, or for their expenditure, been at all times governed by Christian prudence and directed by sound economy? Have they at all times kept at a becoming distance from secular patronage and worldly expediency? These are fair questions. The conductors of the Societies themselves ought not to shrink from them: they need not, and they do not shrink from them. Others ought to approach the discussion of them with purity of motive, with calmness, candour, and enlightened charity.

One point there is on which the spirit of these observations has led us to fix much attention and to

lay much stress:—it is the principle of this work:—THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL IS THE PROPER BUSINESS OF THE CHURCH, AS THE CHURCH. The existence of any institution for this end which is *not* the Church, not composed of its members, ruled by its officers, governed by its laws, and acknowledging the authority of its Head, is, itself, an implied condemnation of the Church. That was, confessedly, the best state of the Church in all time past, when there were no such separate institutions. And surely, if we follow out our cherished principles, and reason from the simplest analogies, that will be the best state of the Church in time to come, when such institutions shall not exist. Happy the day for the Church of Christ herself, when she finds in her own appointed organization THE TRUE MISSIONARY SOCIETY, all her officers and all her members entering as a matter of course and of duty into this great work; when the urging of it shall form an integral part of pastoral instruction, mutual counsel, and fraternal discipline; when every Christian congregation, in its distinct character, and all in their visible union, shall be found faithful to their engagements and active in their duty. Happy for the world, still overspread with spiritual darkness, when the whole Church shall thus hold forth the word of life!

To effect this desirable consummation, a wide field is opened both to “the churches of God” and to those valuable institutions which have sprung up within the Church. We do hope that the voluntary associations which God has already honoured in so signal a degree, will urge their principles at home with increasing boldness and energy, and prosecute their aim abroad

with increasing earnestness and zeal. Through them we trust the Church, which has been partially roused from her apathy, will eventually be brought out into the place assigned to her by her sovereign Lord. We do not desire to see these institutions quenched, like evening stars, in the gloom of night, but rather like the morning stars, absorbed in that brighter flood of glory which they have ushered in. In the present case, as in all practical undertakings, wise and holy men will avoid all extreme, extravagant, and party views. They will endeavour to repress the rashness that would sacrifice the work of existing systems to the arguments of theorists, however ingenious and well-meaning. They will be apt to say, in emulation of very high examples—"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?"* And God forbid that they should leave their work for a single hour to debate with idle men their right to do it in the best way they can! Yet, on the other hand, it were great weakness to cling to our accustomed mode of working, because it is *our* mode, or that of our fathers. There is a want of wisdom as well as of courage in the attempt to stifle inquiry, to elude discussion, to ridicule suggestions, or to put down the investigation of principles. There are principles as clearly revealed in Scripture, and as fully tested by experience, applying to Christian Missions, as those which apply to Christian doctrine, or to Christian morals. Let these principles be brought out. Let them be examined. Let no man, however obscure, be afraid to enounce them. Let no man, however

* Nehem. vi. 3.

eminent, think himself entitled to discourage them. Let them be viewed *as* principles—truths which are to be acted out. Principle is Power.

In thus reviewing the Missionary work of modern times, there is much to awaken gratitude, and very much to enkindle hope. The question of Missions is settled. We are too well informed to be deluded now by romantic tales of innocence and purity in heathen lands. Too much has already been accomplished to allow the Church to be deterred from the prosecution of her high calling. The family motto of the great Hampden expresses our true position—“*Vestigia nulla retrorsum.*”—*There are no footprints for retreat.* Many have received a spirit of holy daring in the name of the Lord. They have “set up their banner.” Like Freedom’s, it “floats against the wind.” The hearts of numbers have been opened to cherish the fervour of their enterprising brethren. God helping them, they will not suffer them to languish for want of aid. Much incense of supplication hath gone up from many temples and from many hearts. Many souls have been saved from death. Churches of Christ are flourishing amidst the wastes of heathenism. God, we hope, will raise up very many of his servants, giving unto them “*the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*” The Church will send out such men, will labour with them, will pray for them. The Missionary work will be a matter of universal interest in the Church. That interest will be felt every day. Instead of evaporating in tender emotion, it will produce the substantial fruits of personal activity. There will be a cheerful preference of this work to private gratifications and party objects ;

or rather this will be the chief private gratification, the main party object. The love of Christ will constrain His people by a gentle, yet stimulating pressure, to live for Missionary ends. The time will come when greater simplicity in laying hold of Missionary views will be the result of a more entire surrender of every thought to the obedience of Christ. Then, it is needless to add, there will be more inquiry, more information, more effort, more sacrifice, more union,—and more prayer.

Whither shall we look for the accomplishment of these hopes? To Him with whom is “the residue of the Spirit.” Had His Spirit not been shed forth, there had been no retrospect like that which the history of Missions has presented. On the Church the Spirit *has* been poured; and on the Church His grace must more largely descend, or she will never realise the prospects we are painting to our hopes. For ourselves we are to pray, though not with selfish aims. Oh! let each minister of Christ daily seek the renewing of his own spirit in earnest devotion to this work! Let every believer do the same. Let us not regard our prayers as a substitute for labour, nor our labour as a substitute for prayer. Let us not perplex ourselves with the comparative importance of prayer and labour in relation to each other. Let us rather feel that to *us* both are necessary alike, and always. Our labours are most strenuous when we have most humbly sought the Lord for His Spirit. The prayers of those that are working the work of the Lord, are hearty and fervent as their diligence and zeal increase. For ourselves, then, yet with a view to the spiritual benefit of others, we are to pray. Let each believer thus pray for himself. Let

each household thus pray for itself. Let each congregation thus pray for itself.—Out of these widening circles there will arise another and a wider circle, embracing all the rest,—THE WHOLE CHURCH WILL BE ONE IN PRAYER; and that prayer will ever culminate in the sublime petition—“Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven!” Towards this we are approaching. To this we must come. Then shall we see a universal care for the perishing world impelling the Church of Christ to go and preach to all that world the gospel of salvation.

CHAPTER IX.

PRESENT OBSTRUCTIONS TO THE PROGRESS OF MISSIONARY EFFORTS.

Theory of Progression.—Survey of the Church.—A Defective View of the whole Question of Missions.—Apathy.—Appearance of Sectarianism.—Evil Influence of Party Operations.—Want of Personal Interest and Conviction the Main Hindrance.—Martyrdom of the Nineteenth Century.—Coldness and Languor of the Church.—Missionary hearts required.—Consequences Anticipated.

MISSIONARY EFFORTS ought not only to be made, but to be continued; not only continued, but increased, and increased by a sort of geometrical ratio. Were we laying down a theory of progression, the following mode of proceeding would commend itself to every thoughtful person, as rational and probable.—The gospel is freely preached to every man. A part of that gospel consists in the declaration of its own adaptation to every human being—in the statement that every human being stands in need of its instructions, its consolations, and its blessings—and in the enforcement on every man that it is *his immediate duty* to embrace it for his own salvation, and then to lay himself out for its universal propagation throughout the world. On these grounds we might fairly presume that every believer would instantly become a Missionary; that his private religious exercises would be diligently attended

to with an earnest desire for the culture of the Missionary spirit in his own heart; and that the chief business of his daily life would be to diffuse the knowledge of that gospel which he has found so much blessed in his own experience, and that spirit of diffusion which he has felt it to be both a duty and a pleasure to cherish in himself. We might fairly presume that the public officers of the Church would labour with a constant and earnest reference to the ultimate design of all the institutions of the Church; would seek the conversion of sinners for the sake of those multiplied conversions which may be hoped to follow from the spirit implanted within the heart of every convert; and would habitually present to the people the great truth—that their own edification is inseparably connected with the ingathering of wanderers to the fold of Jesus Christ. We might fairly presume that prayer, praise, preaching, the administration of symbolic ordinances, the discipline of the Church, the daily assiduities of the Christian pastorate, would have a perpetual reference to the work we are now considering. We might fairly presume that in all large associations of Christians and their pastors, whether in parishes, circuits, counties, synods, dioceses, or provinces, the extension of the gospel to the utmost limits would be the leading object of every consultation and every project. Now supposing all these presumptions to be fair,—which they are, most demonstrably, if we have rightly stated the design of the gospel dispensation,—it would follow, of course, that active effort for the spread of the gospel would be made in a rapidly increasing progression. Every individual con-

vert would be aiming at the multiplication of converts imbibing the same spirit as well as the same principles with himself; and all who were actuated by this spirit would be united in the demonstration of it, and in pressing on towards the accomplishment of the grand design.—On this theory, we see a provision made for the perpetual presence of Missionary life in the Church. We see a provision made for the communication of the gospel to families, villages, towns, counties, nations, and to the world. We see more. We see a provision made for the *success* of such a communication of the gospel. For He who has made it the duty of Christians (as we conceive He has) to act in the way we have been supposing, has assured them that they shall not labour in vain. He has pledged himself to this. He invites the Church to prove Him, to make an experiment on His faithfulness and power.

Such then is our Theory of Missions, deduced from the declarations of the gospel—from the constitution of human nature—from the structure and tendencies of society,—and from the promises of our Lord and Saviour.

But every theory must be taken into consideration along with those practical forces which will be found to work against it, when it is brought into practical operation. Let us deal in this manner, then, with our theory of Missions. Let us survey the Church *as it is*. Let us see what there is in the position of the Church, in the temper of the Church, in the capacities of the Church, in the doings of the Church, to obstruct our theory, to impede the work.

We might here take a wide field indeed, if our object

were to lay hold of tempting themes for declamation. Our object, however, is a very different one. All we aim at is to bring together a few hints which may serve to explain the fact that Missionary efforts are not making the progress which, according to our theory, they *ought* to make.

It is not necessary to enlarge, here, on the obstructions in the heathen world to Christian exertions. These obstructions are manifold. But it has been proved that similar and greater obstructions have given way before the activity and supplications of the Church. We are not, at this moment, considering the difficulties which lie against the measures of the Missionary Church. We are considering the causes *within* the Church, by which the increase and enlargement of such measures have been prevented.

It cannot be questioned by any intelligent observer, that there still prevails throughout the Church a *defective view of the whole Question of Missions*. There may be occasional glimpses of it. There is not a steady looking at it. It is not understood. The time *may* come, nay, we earnestly believe it *will* come, when the whole Christian Church will be convinced that the whole theory of Missions has not been generally understood. But *why* is it not understood? Because it was forgotten—because it was neglected—because the return to it has been very slow, and very feeble—because the means employed to bring us back to it, have been separate from the ordinary means of Christian instruction and excitement—because it has been *left* to special men, at special times, in special places, and in special circumstances, to make Christian Missions the matter of their

special attention—and because it has been inferred in fact (whether wisely or unwisely is not our present question), that there is something in the Missionary work binding so peculiarly on these men, that the obligations resting on all others, if any obligation is confessed at all, goes no further than to a demand of aid in a good and charitable cause.—Such, if we mistake not, is the prevailing estimate of Missions in the Church, even at the present time. There does not seem to be a *perception* of the true character of Christian Missions. It is viewed too much as a charity—a work which it is well to assist, in which the objects are pitied, in which the agents are admired and lauded, and on which it is desirable to implore the Divine blessing. There is not, to any great extent, an intelligent conviction of the judgment, founded on the revealed will of God, that it is a work committed, *by authority*, to every human being by whom the gospel is heard. Now such a want of plainly seeing the nature of the Missionary work, must, of necessity, be a most effectual barrier to the progress of Missionary effort.

It becomes us to write carefully when the defects of Churches and their individual members are concerned, but we cannot repress the conviction that *selfishness* has much to do with this apathy and indifference. Is it not the great aim of our age to make life as easy and pleasant as possible? Does not this lie at the root of the eagerness to make money, to live in a higher style, to have more enjoyments, which, in the present day, characterise Christians as well as others? And thus because we spend more money on ourselves we have less to give to God. Is there not, moreover, in Non-

conformist Christians especially, a disposition to grudge what is given for a foreign and extraneous purpose, as if it were so much subtracted from home purposes? Local and foreign claims are thus regarded as rival and antagonistic; and when the latter are discouraged, through a narrow and selfish policy, the former are no better supported, and lack so frequently the blessing of Him who alone can make our affairs to prosper.

We cannot help observing, too, that there stands in our way a great *apathy* as to *individual obligation*. This arises, partly, from a general apathy on the whole subject of Christianity amongst its professors. There is too much *relative* attention to mere views and opinions, to mere forms, and minor principles. So long as men are *without feeling* on the great interests of salvation, as they affect their own safety and happiness, we look in vain for any feeling on those interests as they affect the world at large. But this apathy also arises, in a great measure, from the blindness or inattention to the special feature of Christianity now before us, to which we have just been adverting. If professed Christians *will* not look at the plain command of Christ which demonstrates their individual duty, both to Him and to their fellow men, we cannot expect them to be sensibly alive to that duty. It is very possible that this insensibility may be, in some degree, accounted for by the manner in which the honest advocates of Missions have been led by existing circumstances to plead their cause. They have been placed on their defence. They have been compelled to justify their own proceedings. They have had to answer captious and selfish objections. They have had

to rectify misunderstandings, and to refute misrepresentations. They have had to narrate facts, to detail anecdotes, to interest the public mind in their object. They have had to make specific arrangements of a financial nature, to enable them to meet the demands which their Christian enterprises have brought upon them. They have had to incur a heavy responsibility, and to devote much thought, and time, and labour. They have been driven to a system and mechanism in their proceedings, which have given to those proceedings the appearance and character of a business peculiarly their own. The effect has been, though contrary to *their* intention, that they have come before the Church at large, as men voluntarily engaged in a scheme of great benevolence, pledged by inevitable engagements, needing the support of the public, and ever ready to acknowledge with courtesy and thankfulness the support which the liberality and kindness of the public may accord to them. The fact, therefore, is, that while a very small fraction of the Church is overwhelmed with *official* duty, the great mass may be said, without any censorious imputation as to motives in any quarter, to continue in a state of apathy, which apathy is lulled and soothed by the very agencies that exist for the purpose of rousing and destroying it.

We must advert, in this place, to another view of existing Missionary institutions which, we are honestly convinced, is prejudicial to the progress of Missionary effort in our day. *There is too much of the appearance of sectarianism and party rivalry in the constitution and management of these institutions.* They present themselves to the public as the separate and competing

struggles of hostile communities, rather than as the combined enterprises of the one Christian Church. We refer to the fact without animadversion on any party or individual. We know not that, in the divided state of the Church, which—we must take leave to say, *unhappily*—has existed so long, Missionary institutions could have been organised in any other way. At the same time, the hope is too strong and too bright to be repressed, that by means of these very institutions, sectarian as they are, “a more excellent way,” both of professing Christianity at home, and diffusing Christianity abroad, will be at length developed.

It may be allowed to us to point out some of the modes in which these party efforts are considered as operating *against* the cause to which they are devoted.

We must take for granted that all true Christians would wish it to be said of them, that they attach higher moment to the vital principles in which they agree, than to the subordinate points of faith, form, or discipline, in which they differ. We must also take for granted that all true Christians are convinced that Missionary institutions found their claim to public support on the broad basis of settled vital truths, and, in no degree, on the specific views which the conductors of any of them have conscientiously adopted for themselves, or retained from their fathers, of the questions still litigated in the Church. We must, further, take for granted that all true Christians, in their Missionary undertakings, are aiming at the conversion of the heathen, by means of the plain and uncontroverted truths of the gospel, and that therefore they all have more sympathy with the success of any

efforts made by any men of any party in the exhibition of these saving truths to the heathen, than they have with the propagation, amongst the heathen, of their own private convictions or sectarian peculiarities.—We take these things for granted, because they are things which ought to be, which are professed by the advocates of all our Missionary institutions, and which we have no doubt are sincerely professed by all who feel any concern for the progress of the gospel in the world.

Let it be observed, then, in the *first* place,—that the carrying on of sectarian institutions for the spread of the gospel must, as human nature is constituted, very much endanger that simplicity of aim, and purity of motive, which are confessed to be of such vast importance in this work. So long as we associate on party principles, it is not *in* us to keep aloof from party designs and party feelings. We cannot help feeling a strong desire for the special triumphs of *our* society, for the popularity of *our* measures, for the success of *our* efforts, in distinction from the triumphs, and popularity, and success of societies, measures, efforts, which we feel *not* to be ours. Argument on such a matter as this is quite out of place. Our appeal is to human nature—to conscience—to fact. It cannot be otherwise. One man may state the truth on this subject more nakedly and boldly than another. Men may have different opinions as to the desirableness of such a state of things. Various apologies and excuses may be offered to give it a less offensive aspect. The actual working of things in the Missionary field certainly does strike different classes of thinkers in very opposite lights. But we may fairly put it to all—whether societies for

spreading *the gospel in which we all agree* would not be carried on with greater simplicity of object, and more earnestness, if wholly disencumbered of all the views, calculations, and expectations, which are now mingled with the one great object.

Then in the *second* place, let the friends of Missions consider the *feebleness of the general impression made in favour of their object, in consequence of the apparently sectarian character of these institutions.*

Without charging absolute sectarianism of spirit on the conductors, or the supporters, or the agents, of any of our institutions, there can be no question that most of these institutions do present themselves, in fact, before the general public, in a character quite as sectarian as our respective congregations for the maintenance of our peculiar opinions and modes. No man will question the *right* of any sect to use all candid and Christian methods of propagating its own peculiar principles. It is a right which they can all claim, which they can all exercise. But if it should so happen that their actually exercising that right is found to interfere with the excitement of general attention, and general co-operation, to the enterprise of sending the gospel of Christ into all the nations, ought not this fact to receive serious consideration from us all—must it not awake painful regrets in the minds of all who, by the supposition already made, are *much more* concerned for the conversion of men's souls to Christ, than for the aggrandisement of their own particular party?

The question then is, whether the fact be so or not. That it is so, every enlightened observer of the ex-

pression of the public mind will, we are assured, bear witness. One of the main grounds of indifference to the cause of Missions lies, as we understand it, in this very fact. Our zeal is considered—perhaps unjustly, yet so it is considered—as the zeal of party—as the fear of being outdone or outstripped by others—as the rivalry of contending sects—as a determination to get beyond each other in the number of our supporters, and the wealth of our resources—as an anxiety, by means of our Missionary advocacy, to bespeak public favour on behalf of our Church, or our creed, or our party. Whether right or wrong, such is the impression resulting from our mode of working at home for the extension of Missions. And we have no hesitation in marking this impression amongst the hindrances to that progress of Missionary effort which we have so deeply at heart.

Let us reflect, in the *third* place,—on the *impediments arising from this same cause, in the scenes of Missionary labours abroad*. There have been fields of Missionary labour occupied by men of one party only. They have been able with tolerable efficiency to occupy them, and to present Christianity to the people as one and undivided. In such cases the whole energies of the Missionaries have been given to the overthrow of superstition, and their converts, undistracted by rival representations of the gospel, have received it in its power. Then, when success has begun, and the Spirit of God has been at work, the Missionaries of another Society have appeared, either to share in the labour, though uninvited, or to attempt, surreptitiously or openly, to reap the harvest which others

have toiled to plant and mature. Then, if not before, the simple minds of native converts have been distracted with one or more of our unhappy controversies at home. From that moment a very great and grievous hindrance has arisen—heart-burnings and alienations—and, in not a few instances, the work of conversion has been checked, whilst in others it has almost ceased, as if the Spirit of God had departed, and the converts already made have been distracted, dwarfed, and demoralised by sectarian rivalries and pretensions. Irreparable harm in numerous instances has thus been wrought, not merely by Romish but by Protestant Missionaries. Surely decency and courtesy demand, if charity to those who differ from others is out of the question, that if the Missionaries of one Society are labouring in some island, or group of islands, or in a tribe, or town, they should be left in undisturbed possession of the field they have chosen; and that only in large populous cities, and extensive kingdoms and provinces, like those of India and China, should the Missionaries of more than one Society be sent to labour.

And, *fourthly*, may we not inquire—whether the disjointed operations now referred to, are not *displeasing the Head of the Church*, so as to exclude us from that patronage which can alone command success? We are treating of the PROGRESS of Missionary effort in the Church. This progress, we deem, ought, upon the Christian theory, to be much more rapid than it is. The Lord of the Church has been calling out His servants to do a great work in His name, and for His glory. He has, in a measure, poured out His Spirit on them to incite them to this work, and to fit them for it.

He has placed before them the most admirable concurrence of circumstances that has ever existed since the commencement of the Christian era. To our nation He has given an extent of empire of which one cannot think but with awe and trembling. To that same nation He has given greater facilities for the spread of the gospel than ever were enjoyed before. On many of the people of that nation He has been pouring out, for three-quarters of a century, a Missionary spirit. From this spirit have arisen, perhaps entirely—certainly to a great extent—our various Missionary Societies. By those Societies great good, as has been shown, is done. But *why* is the same spirit not more widely diffused? *Why* have the efforts which indicate such a spirit not been increasing in the proportion which the principles of the gospel would warrant us to expect? Is it not a fair, a reasonable, a Christian procedure, for believers of every sect to inquire whether there be anything in the *structure* of these institutions incompatible with the order and economy of the dispensation of the Spirit?—These questions are put in anything but a querulous temper. It may be that all is as it ought to be, in these respects. It may be that Christians are pursuing the simple path of duty, in associating for Missionary purposes on sectarian principles. It is possible that such is the only course which, in the present state of men's minds, they can pursue with peace, and with vigour. Most clearly it is their duty, having entered on the Missionary career under such circumstances, not to abandon their present state of operation, *until* another shall commend itself to their hearts and their judgments, as more congenial with

the character of the Christian Church, more accordant with the spirit of the times, and bidding fair, in the deductions of sound reason, and in the analogies of past history, to be more effective in the sublime work before them. We do believe, after long and careful examination, and therefore say it with the boldness of conviction, that there is a spirit abroad in all our communities of a very healthy and energetic character, which will produce, at no long distance of time, a great and beneficial change in our mode of Missionary operation. And it is no small consolation to reflect that the indications of this spirit may be felt in the society of the most sober, cautious, well-informed, and tried friends of most of our Societies. Let it but be clearly made out to the Christian Church, that there is anything defective in any of the principles on which its voluntary efforts for the conversion of the world are carried on, and the way is even now prepared for any wise, simple, well-concerted scheme which is sufficiently catholic to comprehend us all, and sufficiently practicable to secure the concurrence of those amongst us to whose zeal, fidelity, and judgment, the whole Church is already so much indebted. Until such a liberal and hearty union of all sects of true Christians does take place, we are apprehensive that the work will go on but heavily. It seems likely to want the simplicity and strength which have ever characterised the most successful human undertakings. And, what is more important, it *seems* to want that "unity of the Spirit" on which God commands the blessing, even life for evermore.

There was a time when observations of this tendency would have been ill received. And, possibly, there are

quarters in which they will not now be received in the spirit in which they are offered. Be it so. Let the principle advocated be examined, and if it has no foundation in the Documents of our Faith—the inspired Warrant and Guide of the proceedings of the Church—let it be condemned, and cast away as worthless. But if it be, as we hold it, a principle which pervades those documents, we must cling to it, urge it, and anticipate its final establishment in that coming age, when the partitions of sectarianism will be known only as the monuments of times of darkness.

Let no man say within himself, “I do not approve of the present mode of carrying on the Missionary work, therefore I withhold my support from that work, until I see it carried on in a manner more agreeable to my views.”—This is wrong *in itself*,—because the present mode of carrying on the work has been blessed in a degree proportioned, we sincerely believe, to the prevalence of the catholic spirit we are advocating amongst our Missionaries abroad, and their friends at home. For any man to withhold his aid entirely from existing Societies, is, for the present, to withhold his aid from the work altogether. Whatever else is wrong, this cannot be right. Besides, such withdrawal of aid from existing Societies is doing all that can be done to prevent, or indefinitely postpone, the improvement which is professedly desired. It is not by attack—insinuation—defection—discouragement, that any beneficial modification of Missionary Societies will ever be effected. Oh no. It is by the men who compose voluntary Societies, and *by them only*, that improvements, adapting themselves

to the general progress of improvements, are likely to be made. Let us have more Christians, bringing their intelligence, their prudence, their liberality, their zeal, their activity, their "love of the brethren," into these Societies. If they find on examination that no improvement is desirable, they will reject all theories to that effect. If they find that improvement *is* desirable, they will adopt that which they conceive the best.

The *main* obstruction to the progress of Missionary effort in the Church, *is the want of a personal interest in the work, producing a want of personal conviction of duty in relation to it.* This is a mournful symptom, wherever it exists, of a very low state of personal religion. We are touching, indeed, a most delicate matter. But if there be *not* a very low state of personal religion in many, of whose sincerity of profession no doubt is entertained, *why* should the Missionary work languish? If Christians everywhere are alive and earnest, *why* so much advocating—arguing—appealing—exciting, in this matter? If there be no marks of spiritual lethargy, but in the distempered fancy of conceited theorists and wild enthusiasts, *why* does the Missionary cause everywhere come to our doors as a mendicant, and so often go from them, as other mendicants, without relief? Alas, this great enterprise has performed an office at home, not less important than its ostensible office abroad! It has tried us. It is still trying us. Our Lord is putting us under a solemn and searching dispensation of experiment. This is the martyrdom of a liberal age. This is *the fire* of the nineteenth century. We are brought to the test.

Let us draw a picture of a flourishing state of personal religion in the Church. The minister, fully aware of the weighty office he sustains, as one "who watches for souls," earnestly addresses the people with a view to their individual conversion; urging the converted to care with him for the souls of the unconverted. There is much attention paid to accuracy and catholicity of theological belief—more to soundness of theological *sentiments*. There is much regard to social, domestic, and secret prayer. There is much carefulness in the cultivation of Christian graces in all the departments of human life and human intercourse. There is a great decision of character. There is much love. There is a strong desire—a cheerful readiness to be useful in the Church. The family, the neighbourhood, the people of our native land, enter into the warm affections of the heart, and their salvation becomes the theme of serious thought, of benevolent conversation, and of anxious prayer. Never did personal religion flourish without producing the originals from which our picture is drawn. But are we *rich* in such originals? Are there not complainings, all over the land, of our poverty in this respect?

A careful observer of what is very improperly called the religious world, but which *is* The Church, is daily struck with the necessity of a great and general REVIVAL of personal godliness in the Church itself. We want a firmer grasp of Christianity, as having on our consciences the authority of a Divine law to the individual man, and as having the power of a Divine influence on our hearts. We want a heartier surrender to Christ as both our Saviour and our Lord. We want a simpler

experience of the peace which is promised to the penitent believer. We want more of "the heart of flesh."
—Are these imaginings?

The Missionary progress is arrested by the *coldness and languor of THE CHURCH*. Here the impulse must begin which is to subdue the world. We need a succession of impulses. We need new baptisms of "*fire and of the Holy Ghost*." Oh that we felt our responsibility to the world! Our coldness and deadness end not with ourselves. We propagate coldness and death. We taint the moral atmosphere of the world. For our own sakes, and for the sake of our children, it is of vast consequence that our religion should be not only enlightened, but warm and lively. But our present solicitude is for THE WORLD. For the sake of a world which has been sleeping in the sepulchres of spiritual death ever since the quickening word was uttered by the Lord of Life, we lament, we deplore with tears of bitter sorrow, the insensibility of the Church. While she slumbers, one sinful spirit after another passes every moment into eternity with the cry, piercing the very ear of death,—"*No man cared for my soul*." These souls are *not* cared for. It has not been proved that they do not perish. Is it possible that they have been perishing all along? If it be admitted, even as a possibility, that they have perished—then, surely, the need of the gospel is not admitted? Is it to be feared—that multitudes have perished, and perished through the neglect of the Church, though they have died "*in their iniquity*," and receive "*according to their works*?" Surely, surely, had Christians felt an interest in the conversion of the heathen, or were Christians now to

feel *an interest* in sending the gospel to them as the means appointed for their conversion, *all the obstructions to the progress of Missionary effort* would be at once destroyed by *the ENERGY AND UNION OF THEIR ZEAL.*

This is a fire that would ever burn on every altar, consuming the vanities of selfishness, and burning to ashes the last fragment of sectarianism! This is a spirit which would soon bring down upon the Church the light of heaven, and its inspirations, and its love, and its mighty power: “the feeble would be as David, and the house of David as God, as the angel of the Lord!” Let us have, in the Church, MISSIONARY HEARTS—and all the rest will follow. The wisdom to devise—the prudence to restrain—the ardour to advance—the courage to dare—the sympathy to encourage—the hand to help—all will follow. The hindrances within being once overcome, no outward hindrance will appal. A determined and united Church, listening to the voice of her Almighty Leader, *drinking of the cup whereof He drank*, and receiving the *baptism wherewith He was baptised*, will go forth throughout the world, which He claims as His inheritance. She will lift up her voice upon the mountain-top to every dweller on the earth, proclaiming the salvation of her God. She will take the Cross of the atonement to every nation. She will advance with the majesty of truth, and the earnestness of mercy. Every word will be clothed with power. Every step will be guarded by the shield of The Most High. Her enemies shall crouch at her feet. The idol-gods of the heathen shall be smitten, and shall perish. God will “pour out His spirit upon all flesh.”

And *can* such scenes be realised? We need not ask.

It is promised that they *shall* be realised. And *when*? Whenever the Church of Christ resolves to do her duty, and, in the doing of it, pleads the promise that beams so brightly on the command: "PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE,—AND, LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD."

CHAPTER X.

THE EVILS RESULTING TO THE CHURCH FROM THE DEFECT OF THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT.

Sin of the Church.—Positive Loss to the Church.—Facts.—Early Sects in the East.—Movements in the West.—Universal Improvement.—Discoveries.—Wars.—Personal Loss sustained for want of the Missionary Spirit.—Loss to the Church at large.—Language of Baxter.—Defect of the Missionary Spirit produces feebleness, languor, divisions.—National Churches.—Language of Dr. Morrison.—Coldness of the Church.—The Missionary work to revive the Church.—Swan's Letters.

IF the Missionary spirit be one of the elements in the prosperity and glory of the Christian Church, it is obvious that many evils must result to the Church from a defect of that spirit. We have dwelt on certain features in the present state of the Church, which account for such a defect. The defect is itself an evil, springing from many other evils. But it is the tendency of all evils to spread a baneful influence around them. So it is with the one under our present consideration. The Church *sins* in not caring for the world. And the Church *suffers* for not caring for the world. As she sows, so she reaps. Her prosperity, in a great degree, is in her own hands. She may be happy, peaceful, triumphant, if she will.

A very cursory recollection of the history of the Church will illustrate the general position—that a want of

lively devotion to Missionary objects is a positive loss to the Church of Christ. It has proved to be so in fact. When she circumscribed her solitudes, and the distant nations committed to her charge faded away from her conscience and her heart, her own light was soon covered with the clouds of error; her simplicity was soon corrupted by the devices of her enemies; her purity was soon tarnished by the worst vices of society; her spirituality was soon debased by the alliances and dependencies of earth. She fell from her high estate. At one time the favourite, and at another the victim, of a tyrant's whims, she mingled with the strife of warriors and the arts of courtiers; and, instead of being the Teacher, she assumed the garb and arrogated the style, of the Mistress of the Nations. Her glory was degradation—her strength was weakness—her union was the tameness of death. The evils thus resulting to the Church from the failure of the Missionary spirit have been pourtrayed, though too briefly, in the fifth chapter of this volume. Their weight will, perhaps, be more fully perceived, if we review the costly efforts which were demanded, in other countries and in our own, to rouse her from her stupor, and to restore her to her ancient spirit.

It is to be hoped that, even in the darkest ages of the past, there were not a few of the faithful who preserved, according to their power, some sparks of the ancient spirit. Many errors, it is true, sprang up in every age within the bosom of the Church. But these errors were often mixed with truths, and with genuine zeal for their propagation. The errors have been, happily, forgotten: the truths were remembered, the

spirit retained, and they are remembered and retained still. Those who embraced the truths, and cherished the diffusive spirit of the condemned sectaries, were branded with names descriptive of the imputed errors—errors, often, which the persons thus branded never heard of, or heard of only to reject them. It ought never to be forgotten, though it too often is forgotten, that the most popular histories of the Church have been drawn from sources over which the enemies of these men presided. In the seventh century many of them were scattered abroad; and the candid reader of their opinions, practices, and sufferings, will perhaps agree with us in the conclusion—that, however the Paulicians and other sectaries of the East may have erred, not the errors they maintained, so much as the truths they brought to light, and their active spirit in diffusing those truths, secured for them the honours of the sword, the gibbet, and the flames.

The same causes which produced desertion from the vast system of spiritual monopoly which had grown like a deadly fungus on the ruins of the ancient spirit in the East, were operating, with still greater energy, in the West. A continuous ray of historic light gleams through the gloom of ages, illustrating the struggles of devoted men, panting for the freedom and expansion of former days.

Many courses of events were preparing the way, under the guidance of that Lord to whom all power in heaven and earth is given, for the spreading of the gospel, for a more vigorous rescue of the Church from the inactivity which had benumbed her. The spirit which awoke these western nations from their

slumber was the *spirit of universal improvement*. Everything served to show that the race of man was moving on to a new development of his social nature. A new path to India was traced along the seas. A new hemisphere was found on the other side of the Atlantic. Men's minds expanded with the enlargement of the world in which they lived. The movements of Europe had long been advancing in the direction of enlightened freedom. The feudal aristocracy had been gradually losing its strength, having no foundation in the principles of human nature. The Crusades, and other wars, had impoverished the nobility. Commerce had enriched the trading class. Free cities and voluntary confederations sprang into existence. The fall of the Greck Empire, and the consequent dispersion of learned men, had given a new impulse to the diffusion of general knowledge; and schools for teaching the ancient languages, history, criticism, science, rapidly rose against the clamours of ignorance, and the menaces of superstition. Printing was invented, which, by giving *certainly* and *permanence* to the results of wisdom and civilisation, secured the world from the possibility of going back to the darkness and despotism of the barbarous ages that had passed away. The fountains of intelligence were unsealed. The stone was rolled away from the well's mouth. THE SCRIPTURES could no longer be withheld. There was a resurrection of the human mind. The Church felt the vital energy, and began to move. Then came a war of ethereal weapons. The giant power that had overlaid the prostrate nations was smitten, and shuddered, and shook all Europe. Kings, priests, swordsmen, girded on their armour.

Dreadful was the struggle. For it was a strife of principles as well as of interests—of principles and interests reaching to the deep foundations of society, and leading to a conflict which the world will never see ended till “THE MYSTERY OF GOD IS FINISHED.”

Amid these outward agitations, the Christian mind is allured by the glowing brightness of that historic light in which he sees the ancient spirit of the Church retracing her steps to the ascendancy from which she had been cast out. This is not the occasion on which to commemorate the names, the energy, the majestic eloquence, the high daring, the meek endurance, the agonising prayers and labours of those saints of Christ who had to win for us the liberty we now enjoy, of propagating the gospel at our pleasure. Yet it is the occasion on which to remind the churches of the Lord, as they repose, with but too much ease and inactivity, beneath the tree of Christian peace, that the tree was planted by the toil, and watered by the tears, of the men of other times. “*Other men have laboured ;*”—are *we* “entering into their labours ?” “They have sowed,”—are *we* “reaping what they have sown ?”

Now if the evils flowing from the decline of the old Missionary spirit of the Church are so great and many, if the partial restoration of that spirit has been brought about by such mighty workings of providence, and at so vast an expense of human conflict and suffering, ought we not to behold the apathy of the Church towards Christian Missions with fear and trembling ?

There are two methods which we may pursue in displaying the evils *now* resulting to the Church, from the defect of the Church in the life and energy of the

Missionary work. We may show, theoretically, what evils *must* result: and we may, then, show, practically, the evils which we see and feel to result, in *fact*, from such a state of things.

FIRST,—Let us see, theoretically, what evils *must*, according to the principles of the gospel, proceed from this cause. These evils may be traced, in the experience and character of individual Christians, and, as consequences flowing from hence, in the general aspect of the Church collectively considered.

Where there is a personal deficiency of Missionary spirit, there will, of necessity, be the want of an habitual and constant reference to some of the sublimest aims of Christianity, as well as to some of the most solemn and urgent demands of the Redeemer. The mind is contracted in its range, takes a limited view of the gospel dispensation, perceives not the grandeur, elevation, and expansion of the great system in which the Christian finds the grounds of his faith, the principles of his character, and the elements of his peace and hope. The eye of the mind is not opened to the fullness and splendour of the scenes which are painted by the hand of God on the fields of Revelation. The ear of the inner man listens not to the loud and clear tones in which the Lord of the universe summons every believer of the gospel to sound its invitations through the world. The conscience thrills not to the call of duty. The heart is not exercised in that sympathy with the end of the Saviour's agony, which is the preparation for a final entrance into the Saviour's joy. The talents entrusted by the Lord for improvement in a patient course of self-denying usefulness, are not laid

out, occupied, improved, in the spirit of heedful and humble fidelity, in the daily anticipation of the hour when the Lord of the servants shall come to reckon with them, and when He will pronounce so hearty an approval, and confer so gracious a reward on the "good and faithful servant." The prayers which are offered at the throne of mercy, in the name of Him who endured the "travail of His soul" for the redemption of a world, cannot, in the absence or languor of Missionary spirit, breathe the warmth and earnestness, for the accomplishment of the will of God, which belong to genuine believing prayer. There is much spiritual loss sustained. There cannot be that firm laying hold of the truth, that delight in it, that confidence in its power, that sympathy with its progress, that longing for its triumphs, with which the God of grace has connected our spiritual prosperity. "*They shall prosper that love Thee.*" Were the Missionary spirit taken home with eager welcome into the heart,—would there not be a *higher order of experience* realised by Christians? And each Christian, in every sphere of life, feeling himself associated with a course of proceedings stamped with the authority of God, subordinating to itself all the workings of providence, and assured of final and universal triumph, would there not be a more marked decision of character, a higher bearing, a nobler consistency, a clearer and brighter evidence from day to day of being "changed into the image of the Lord from glory to glory?" We are, surely, not making an extravagant or censorious averment, when we say that there do prevail amongst Christians narrow and unworthy views of the dispensation under which they are

called—that there *is* a lack of diligence and fervency of spirit in the service of the Lord—that there is not a faithful and anxious *improvement* of the capacities for usefulness—that there is a lamentable inattention to the knowledge of Christ in the fellowship of His sufferings, and in being “made conformable unto His death”—that there is a low and feeble tone in the personal experience of religion—that there is much inconstancy, much timidity, much ambiguity of character, great inconsistency of profession.

It were a waste of words to show that these are evils. And whence do they arise? The causes of human evil are too complex to allow a wise man to give a single answer to such a question. Nor are we now entering on a discussion. Yet we may safely say that where a true Missionary spirit exists, many of these evils disappear; and where such a spirit does not exist they continue, they multiply, they increase. Were the mournings of Christians more frequently viewed as arguments for self-inspection, and for a manly and vigorous application of the *whole* gospel to their case, how much would their perplexities be simplified, and the source of their uneasiness explained. We can be happy only in conformity with the will of Christ, as well as in reliance on His grace. To seek consolation in any other way, is to court disappointment. To think we are happy in any other way, is to shut our eyes, lull our consciences, and dream. The hour of awaking must, sooner or later, arrive.

Now, if there be a want of clearly apprehended principle, and a want of lively and satisfactory experience in the spiritual history of individual Christians,

the deficiency will pervade the whole Church to a greater or less extent. Without a Missionary spirit, the Christian Church never did prosper, never can. We are not forgetting the labours of holy ministers, nor the piety of private Christians, in times when there were no collective efforts for the spread of the gospel, such as is now our privilege to witness. We owe to them a debt of veneration and gratitude for their noble stand, their treasures of theology, their prayers *for us*, and their preparations for the work, on which we shall enter with a zeal and devotion proportioned to the degree in which we embrace their principles and imbibe their temper. But they had a Missionary spirit, though its modes of manifestation and means of exertion were different from ours. The following extract from Baxter's Narrative of his Life and Times, is a very touching illustration of the tendency of matured principles to excite a Missionary spirit. "My soul is much more afflicted with the thoughts of the miserable world, and more drawn out in desire of their conversion, than heretofore. I was wont to look but little further than England in my prayers, as not considering the state of the rest of the world; or, if I prayed for the conversion of the Jews, that was almost all. But now, as I better understand the case of the world, and the method of the Lord's Prayer, there is nothing in the world that lieth so heavy upon my heart as the thoughts of the miserable nations of the earth. It is the most astonishing part of all God's providence to me, that He so far forsaketh all the world, and confineth His special favour to so few, that so small a part of the world hath the profession of

Christianity, in comparison of Heathens, Mahommedans, and other infidels! And that, among professed Christians, there are so few that are saved from gross delusions, and have but any competent knowledge; and that among those there are so few that are seriously religious and truly set their hearts on heaven. I cannot be affected so much with the calamities of my own relations, or the land of my nativity, as with the case of the Heathen, Mahommedan, and ignorant nations of the earth. No part of my prayers are so deeply serious as for the conversion of the infidel and ungodly world, and that God's name may be hallowed, and His kingdom come, and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Nor was I ever before so sensible what a plague the division of languages was, which hindereth our speaking to them for their conversion; nor what a great sin tyranny is, which keepeth out the gospel from the most of the nations of the world. Could we but go among Turks and Heathens, and speak their language, I should be but little troubled for the silencing of eighteen hundred ministers all over in England, nor for all the rest that were cast out in Scotland and Ireland, there being no employment in the world so desirable in my eyes, as to labour for the winning of such miserable souls; which maketh me greatly to honour Mr. John Eliot, the apostle of the Indians of New England, and whoever else have laboured in such work."

Similar feelings, however expressed, might be gathered from the remains of the most distinguished servants of God in every age; and it is far from being improbable that, in the order of providence,

their feelings, uttered in their day, imparted to the people with whom they had intercourse, and embodied, more or less, in their immortal writings, have often been the remote means of calling forth the spirit-stirring efforts of a more peaceful and more enterprising age. Their history, far from weakening, serves to strengthen the general principle—that the spirit of Missions is essential to the prosperity of the Church. Amongst the evils arising in the Church from the defect of this spirit, we may enumerate the following:—

It produces *feebleness* and *languor* in the Church. The energy and life which characterised the Church at the beginning were, doubtless, the gifts of Christ by the agency of the Holy Ghost. These gifts were intimately connected with that simplicity of individual consecration, and that heartiness of general union, which covered the nations with the heralds of the Cross. When that consecration became rare and that union ceased to be vital and effective, the Church was shorn of her strength, and her members became as other men. In the degree in which the healthful spirit of antiquity has urged the Church to the great work of propagation, she has lifted up her head, and regained her standing amongst men. But because this spirit has not *yet* attained its living mastery and commanding influence in the Church, the Church is still weak and prostrate. Whilst idolatry reigns in all the revelry of vice and misery—whilst the fierce ardour or stupefying fatalism of Moslemism are still kindling the soldiers of the Crescent to the chivalry of war, or benumbing them with the opiates of delusion—while the emissaries of the false church are com-

passing sea and land, and making proselytes—while the votaries of pleasure, and gain, and ambition, in the various walks of dissipation, and commerce, and politics, and art, and science, are urging their career with vigour, and earnestness, and success—where—oh where is the Church of the Lord—the Church on which He has poured His light and grace—the Church which He has equipped for the holy war—the Church on which He has lavished the gifts of His Providence and His Spirit? She is not holding forth her light as a blazing torch amid the darkness of the earth. She is not lifting up her voice like a trumpet, calling the nations to enter into the temple of salvation. She is not girding herself with strength for the combat with evil principles and with invisible powers. She is not pushing her conquests. She is not taking her proper, her assigned position, as the Instructress of mankind. Compared with what she *ought* to be,—she is feeble and languid. Compared with what she *might now* be,—she is feeble and languid. Compared with what she *once was*,—she is feeble and languid. Compared with what she *must* be,—she is feeble and languid. She wants the renewing of her mighty youth. She wants that comprehensiveness of thought, that largeness of heart, that depth of feeling, that anxiety of desire, that activity of effort, directed to her own enlargement in the destruction of every form of error and in the withering of every element of opposition, which should indicate her march to universal empire.

The lack of Missionary spirit produces, also, in a certain measure, many of our unhappy divisions in the Church. The same facts are often both the causes and

effects of the general state of mind in human society, and it is often a question of much difficulty to settle precisely when they are causes and when they are effects. That the inactivity of the Church in spreading the vital doctrines of the gospel over the earth is increased by all those divisions which take place on points of confessedly less importance than the plain duty here considered, is instantly perceived to be a statement in full accordance with the known working of human nature. For the attention of Christians being warmly and eagerly as well as conscientiously directed to the *centres* of their respective parties, their attention, to that degree, is almost necessarily withdrawn from the grand centre of life and activity, which, notwithstanding our separations, does virtually bind us in one whole. And let us look at facts. Let controversies be taken into account, and surmisings, and jealousies, and local rivalry, and the timid shrinking from contact, and the disjointing influence of personal alienation, and temporary ebullitions of party feeling. Do *these* things not occur? And, occurring, do they not absorb the mental energies and the social sympathies and resources, which, but for these things, might have been happily consecrated to the Missionary operations of the Church?

Then, on the other hand, the absence or lowness of Missionary spirit, opens the way for divisions, affords time for them, allows the operation of those tempers in which they originate, and by which they are formed and prolonged. Had the founders of the National Churches in Christendom been imbued with a Missionary spirit, how much error, persecution, schism, and

waste, both of political and Christian energies, might have been prevented. Their attention would not have been confined to their own states. They would have remembered that the Church of Christ is of no country, but designed for all countries without respect of persons, governments, or nations. They would have perceived that the affairs of the Church ought not to be identified with the limited interests of separate kingdoms, and with the disputes arising from the conflict of those interests. With the exception of the Jewish nation, God has never regarded any *nation* as His “peculiar people.” The most unwarrantable assumptions of this kind have been current in our own country. “Our God will crown *His chosen isle* with fruitfulness and peace”—is a beautiful *patriotic* sentiment, and has some portion of truth, if it is meant merely to recognise the sovereign goodness of God in blessing the people of this “isle” with so bright a dispensation of His gospel. But it is a question deserving of high and weighty consideration, whether the identifying of church and state, by circumscribing the proclamation of mercy within the boundaries of particular countries, may not be regarded as originating in too narrow conceptions of the duty of Christians in relation to the gospel; and, also, whether these narrow conceptions, reduced to practice in *nationalising* Christianity, are not chargeable with much of that spirit of contest and division by which the Church has been so much wounded and dishonoured. It would be very distant from the intention of these pages to produce an impression unfavourable to the faithful members of the churches in Europe which are more or less national,

or to afford the slightest ground for sectarian triumph to those whose education, or convictions, or prejudices have placed them in a state of separation from the national churches. The following language, from the pen of one of the most liberal of men, both in principle and practice, himself a tried and energetic Missionary, comes very near to the expression of the views which we desire to see promoted on this subject, and they are, alas, as true now as when they were first given to the world. "Christian churches do not yet seem to feel that effort to evangelise the world is so much a duty as it really is; and a duty binding on each Christian to the extent of his means. Hence it is that there are so many staying at home to sit in judgment on others, and so few going forth to do the work. Missionary Societies have, generally, far more Directors than Missionaries—more generals than soldiers; and a very large number of the ministers of religion in the United Kingdom, as well as the philosophers, are totally regardless of the subject; as if the propagation of Christianity, the religion of the divine Saviour, whom they profess to serve, was no part of their concern. The Protestant churches of Scotland, England, and Ireland, have but very slowly acknowledged that the diffusion of Christianity in the world is at all a part of their duty; and many of the most pious Christians seem to feel proud that these churches have at length acknowledged it to be right and proper to use means to evangelise the nations, instead of mourning over their remissness and neglect in days that are past, and proceeding immediately to vigorous action. In the nature of things, it is necessary that there be a

division of labour in the ministration of the gospel—the same individual cannot be, at the same time, a resident pastor and a foreign Missionary; but to be concerned for the diffusion of the doctrines of the gospel throughout the earth, is equally binding on all Christ's ministers, to the extent of their opportunities; and any Christian minister who knows his duty will never think that Missions should have no part of his care, and attention, and help. It is lamentable to see what a large portion of the bishops, and presbyters, and deacons, and people, in British churches, put themselves *quite outside of the Missionary concern*, and think that they may innocently have nothing to do with it, except now and then to cavil, and sneer, and find fault. Whereas, if these self-called apostolic churches were to emulate the Apostolic Age, they would select from themselves the ablest, and wisest, and most pious, and most dignified of *their own number*, and send them forth to preach the gospel, as the church of Antioch did Paul and Barnabas. Then, instead of seeking for a new class of men from amongst the people—a class of men whom they think inferior to the clergy—some of them would themselves go, and let their vacancies at home be filled by others. But how few are the examples, in these days, of either the Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Congregational churches having acted thus.” *

Whilst Christian churches are thus *defective* in one of the primitive features of Apostolic Christianity, who can wonder at their divisions and their weakness? Oh that all Christians “were children in malice, but MEN

* “Thoughts on Missions,” by Dr. Morrison, of China.

in understanding!" Oh, that in the golden cup of charity for a world of perishing brethren, bishops, presbyters, preachers, people, would drink the spirit of their Lord and His apostles! Till we all drink into that one spirit, our inactivity will increase our divisions, and our divisions will increase our inactivity in the work which Christ has given us to do.

In so languid and divided a state of the Church, it were strange if we had not cause to lament the great degree of *coldness* which repels and almost freezes our better feelings. In the closet—there is coldness. At the family altar, and in the domestic circle—there is coldness. In the spheres of social intercourse—there is coldness. In the public solemnities of religion, amidst much that is serious, decent, reverent, to a mind imbued with the olden spirit of the gospel—there is a coldness that makes the heart shiver. Our Christianity is too much an intellectual system—too metaphysical—too mechanical—too narrow—and too stationary. The ideas and expectations of our worshippers do not glow with that warmth, that enlightened ardour which is due to our God and Saviour, and which ought to be inspired by the recollection and the presence of Him whose humanity was consumed by the intensity and tenderness of His zeal for our salvation. How rarely do we realise those burning thoughts which live in all the language of the Scriptures! How seldom do we enter, either alone or socially, into those high, commanding, constraining, enkindling views of our Christian duties, and Christian hopes, which shed such grandeur on the religion of the Cross as expounded by the apostles and martyrs of the Lamb! What

a poor substitute have we for the freshness and power that, of old, carried men away from earthly thoughts and fleshly consultations into the wide field of spiritual glory which opens to the Church on earth the dazzling prospects of eternity ! Alas, are not many of us more concerned for the casquet than for the jewel—for the altar than for the flame—for opinions than for sentiments—for the forms of religion than for religion itself ? Are not many of us afraid of being counted enthusiasts by the enemies of our Lord ? It is more than probable that if one man were now to betray, for a single year, the ardent devotion of wisdom to Christian objects which Paul displayed from his conversion till his death, not only the profane but the pious would call him an enthusiast. Would to God that enthusiasts of such an order would arise—men of strong intellect, sound judgment, practical experience, good temper, firm principles, and warm hearts,—“*FULL of faith and of the Holy Ghost.*”

If there be any course of mental discipline likely, in the order of Divine Providence, to produce such men, we do conceive that such a course is traced in the Missionary work. “The apostolic days exemplified the true Missionary spirit. And what did the disciples do then ? They that had houses or lands sold them, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet. And what then ? Were they fools and enthusiasts for so doing ? Had they formed an extravagant estimate of the *riches* in glory by Christ Jesus ? Were they carried away with vain hopes of the *inheritance* of the saints in light ? Did they think too much of the exceeding great reward ? Is the example of Zaccheus not to be

imitated, who gave the half of his goods to feed the poor? Is there not one rich Christian in Great Britain—are there not ten—are there not a hundred—yea, a thousand who ought to say, ‘The half of my goods I give to the poor heathen’? Much has been said, by some, of churches upon the Scripture model. I wish there were more ambition to be followers of the first churches in their unreserved consecration of persons and property to the cause of Christ. These would be scriptural churches indeed! Every thing in its own place, and in its due order—but I say, avaunt boasted scriptural order and simplicity, where this spirit is wanting! Let but the true spirit of zeal to promote the cause of Christ fully possess the hearts of the Christian part of the population of Great Britain, and there will be no want of Missionaries, and no lack of funds to support them.”* Is it so? Then how great an evil it must be to want that spirit! What an injury to the Church! What a loss to the world!

* Swan’s “Letters on Missions.”

CHAPTER XI.

THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD.

The Spirit of Modern Thought indicative of great changes in the Future.—Protestant Christianity the only Religion capable of ultimate and universal diffusion.—Probable Future Results of its Influence.—The Millennial Glory.—Its long duration.—The Evangelization of the World.—Its certainty assured from the Divine Character and Purposes ; from the declarations of Holy Scripture ; from the Power and Tendencies of Christian Truth.

THE world cannot remain as it is. From the analogy of the past, we may assuredly argue that flux and change will also characterise the future. We see, too, the signals of change in that large and powerful class who think and theorise, that they may believe and act. The deepest principles of political and social life, science and its applications, religion, its province and its authority—are all investigated with an earnestness and boldness which must result in the destruction of much which now exists. The Christian is most profoundly moved by whatever affects the destiny of his religion, and though no intelligent person believes otherwise than that it will endure as long as our race, the form of its existence is not equally certain. Will it merge into a different dispensation ? Will it ever be the religion of the vast Tartar and Indo-Ayran races ; and, if so, how will it be modified by their

mental and moral idiosyncrasies? Will it ever have a greater power over individual wills, and hearts, and lives, than it now has? Will it ever be universal? These are questions which the benevolent, the sanguine, and the despondent ask, though with very different emotions.

Waiving the rest, to the latter we give an affirmative reply. Before giving our reasons for this, it may be well, at the outset, to define broadly what is meant by the universal diffusion of Christianity. We believe, then, that Islamism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and all existing polytheisms will die out and give place to Christianity, in some such way as Druidism and Greek and Roman paganism did. That Popery and Oriental Christianity will disappear, either by some signal judgment from God, or by the gradual spread of the truth. That not only can none of the other religions of the world spread, but that no new form of faith can possibly gain the suffrage of any large portion of our race. That the Christianity which is to become world-wide is substantially the same which evangelical Protestants now possess; but that in the future it will exert a power over individuals most widely, such as is now but occasionally seen, and over communities to an extent which has never yet been witnessed. That as the result of this universal diffusion and augmented power, grand social and political changes will ensue, all conducive to human enlightenment, elevation, and happiness.—For instance, the nations will learn war no more. The wisest and best forms of government will be adopted. All the vexed questions relating to land, to the rights of nations, to the relations of

rich and poor, masters and servants, rulers and the ruled, will be wisely and impartially settled. Science and art will be made entirely subservient to the welfare of humanity; the earth will be far more productive than now; labour will be lightened, and life will be prolonged; the conditions of life will be made more pleasant and restful; and it will be comparatively easy to be good, kind, and helpful, because sin, selfishness, meanness, and falseness will be as comparatively rare.

How long this millennial glory will endure, it is not for us to say; but there are good and sufficient reasons for measuring it by not less than tens of thousands of years. We believe this, because all the operations of God are deliberate, and stretch through periods which to the human mind seem vast; because, in the past, all great moral and religious revolutions have been very slowly elaborated; because there is not a particle of evidence, either in nature, in science, or in the Bible, to prove that the history of humanity is approaching to its close; because there are numerous Scripture intimations that the time during which Messiah shall reign and triumph will be greatly in excess of all previous cycles of history; and because the very conditions of the Divine government demand that the past six thousand years of prevailing darkness, error, evil, and unrest, shall be but a short period when compared with the vast ages during which all God's purposes of love and beneficence, having ripened, shall yield their precious fruitage of light, truth, goodness, and peace.

We argue, then, that *the world will be evangelised.*

I. FROM VARIOUS REASONS AFFECTING THE DIVINE PURPOSES AND CHARACTER.

II. FROM THE DECLARATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

III. FROM THE POWER AND TENDENCY OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH TO CONSUMMATE, FINALLY, SUCH A RESULT.

I. *The ultimate end of everything done, or allowed to be done, by God must be His own glory.*—Should this be questioned if applied to the history of every individual, or of any single event, it will, we think, be conceded as true of the entire history of a race, or of a world like our own. In designing the creation of the world, for instance, He must have set this before His mind, as indeed the highest of all purposes. His omniscience must have foreseen every contingency; His power must have provided for it; and His benevolence must alike have desired and willed it. We know that this was His grand purpose in the creation of our race. (Rev. iv. 11.) We know too that the Fall, however disastrous and widespread in its effects, cannot defeat the original purpose of the Eternal, but that rather it will be made subservient to His infinite will. This antidote exists in the work of Christ. As a remedy, it is perfect in conception and intention. It not only secures the final triumph of the Divine pleasure and glory, but enhances that glory immeasurably. But although redemption is complete as a principle, it is not as a fact. Time is necessary for the full exhibition of its power and beneficence. But that time will be given. “We see not yet all things put under Him.” “But He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet.” “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now,” waiting for the redemption which is to make it free and happy. But surely nothing less than the utter defeat and overthrow of evil, and its

subservience to God, nothing short of the universal and complete ascendancy of Christian truth and feeling, will satisfy the longings of creation, the demands of the Divine authority and government, or the measureless love and pity of the Saviour. If the religious history of our world should stop short of this, then evil would be proved to be stronger than good, and failure might be charged against the plans and purposes of the Almighty!

II. *The statements of Scripture seem very clearly to show that the whole world will be finally Christianised.*—It is the uniform doctrine of Scripture that the population of the world is to be rescued from the hands of him who is now its god. Sin and Satan, however strong, and however widely spread their dominion, have to be defeated and overthrown. “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head,” is the utterance with which the first promise of Messiah is associated; “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil,” is the declaration associated with Messiah’s coming; and in Rev. xx. 1-4, we are told that Satan shall be bound, cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up, that he may deceive the nations no more, for a thousand years. We will not stay to inquire into the details of this remarkable and variously interpreted passage, but that it is declaratory of the utter defeat of the power of evil in our world, and the consequent spread and triumph of goodness for a vast and indefinite period—symbolized by a thousand years; or by prophetic computation of a day for a year, and consequently for three hundred and sixty-five thousand years—is clear.

Or it may be that, in accordance with another Scripture usage, a large definite number is employed to express a yet greater general one.*

This overthrow of evil, this triumph of goodness, is ever represented as the final and inevitable result of Christ's kingly power. "All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him;" for all nations shall call Him blessed. "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee." (Psa. xxii. 27.)

But this reign of Christ is the reign of Christianity. It is impossible to separate the two. Christ's kingdom is not of this world—it is a kingdom of souls. It differs from all earthly kingdoms. It is founded in truth, love, and goodness, and all its aims and ends are spiritual, not material—divine, not human. So clearly is all this deducible from what Christ was, from what He taught, from what He founded, and from what grew up as the result of apostolic effort, that it seems strange that any different conception can be entertained.

There are two series of prophetic revelations relating to the history and final triumph of the kingdom of Christ which especially deserve notice. One is in the Old Testament, the other in the New; one in the prophecies of Daniel, the other in the Apocalypse of St. John. The former is repeated twice; first in the second chapter, containing a description of the great image seen in vision by Nebuchadnezzar; and then

* See, for example, Psa. xci. 7; Dan. vii. 10; Ezek. xlvi. 30 Matt. xviii. 27; Rev. vii. 4; xiv. 13.

in the seventh chapter, in Daniel's own vision and dream of the five monarchies. Both these unfold the history of the world in grand outline; but in both cases it is the culmination and issue to which all else not only leads on, but is made subservient. In the first instance, a stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, breaks in pieces all that is opposed to it, and fills the whole earth; which Daniel thus interprets:—"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." (ver. 44.) In the second vision the same result, though with different imagery, is unfolded. (vii. 13, 14, 27.)

The views exhibited by Daniel reappear in the visions of John, but more in detail. There, in the opening vision, we have presented to us the Ancient of Days, and the Son of Man as the Lamb, with the elders or representatives of the entire redeemed Church. Then scene after scene follows, of instruction, warning, help, protest, wrath, and punishment; but all hastening to the inevitable issue of the world's doom and the Church's victory. And so the whole ends with the utter destruction of the beast, and with the saints living and reigning with Christ upon the earth, or, in other words—possessing the kingdom.*

But as the Divine benevolence is illimitable in its desire for the reclamation of our entire race, and as the redemption provided in Christ is sufficient for all,

* Fairbairn on Prophecy, p. 308.

and yearns pityingly for all, so the utterances of the Bible, when foretelling the future of the Church, describe a state of things which can only be fulfilled by her universal diffusion and complete triumph. The following passages seem clearly to point to such a consummation. "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." (Psa. ii. 8.) "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." (Isa. lxi. 11.) "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (xi. 9.) "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, My name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering: for My name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Mal. i. 11.) "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. xi. 15.) Besides these, no limits short of universality will fulfil the conditions, or realise the anticipations and hopes, of such passages as Psa. ii., lxxii., xevi.; Isa. lx.; Micah iv.; Matt. xiii. 33-35; John xii. 32.

III. *We argue the universal spread and triumph of Christianity from the power and tendency of Divine truth finally to consummate such a glorious result.*—That there is power in the gospel to evangelise the entire human

race, few of our readers will doubt. It can reach, save, elevate, and set on a career of limitless improvement the greatest sinner, the most debased savage, the most prejudiced opponent, and the coldest and darkest spiritual nature. It has done this times without number, and thus, as it professes to be for all, and has to be offered to all, so it can reach all. And this power to meet all the wants and exigencies of man as a depraved, debased, and suffering creature of God, is eternal and ever active. We know what it did in apostolic times among the Jews, Greeks, Romans, and Barbarians; but we see equal proofs of its power now, among our different Western races. Then, too, we have in recent years taken it to yet other peoples; and among Hindus, Chinese, Polynesians, and Africans, it is still mighty through God to work its great spiritual and moral revolutions.

We have abundant proof, also, of its great power to reform and elevate society. Nowhere has the world ever seen families comparable to Christian households, for nobleness, purity, and happiness—and these exist in tens of thousands. No system, either political, social, or religious, has ever formed communities, which, for virtue, benevolence, divineness of purpose, and eagerness to realise such purpose, can be compared to Christian churches—and these now exist in tens of thousands. Widening the circle of the community, we see in the Port Royalists of France, the English Puritans of the age of Cromwell, and the new England States, during almost the whole time of their existence, conditions of life, which for nobleness, virtue, religiousness, and all that adorns and elevates humanity, has

nowhere else been surpassed. And, finally, the power of Christianity has lifted our own nation to a higher position than any other has hitherto reached. Doubtless we have much to learn as well as to unlearn; but even that very consciousness we have of defect, that restless impatience with ignorance, wrong, and crime, and that eager stretching towards a higher level still,—what are they but the result of the educating power of Christianity? No nation was ever so free from great crimes; none ever rose to power and wealth so steadily and legitimately; none ever used its power more moderately; none ever sought with equal zeal and disinterestedness to befriend others and amend itself.

What Christianity has done for these persons, these communities, these states, and nations, it is capable of doing again and again. We can see, indeed, more widely than ever was seen before, its divine work of reclamation, reform, and renewal going on. Superstitions are dying out, great evils are denounced, ignorance and vice are attacked, and the assimilating influence of true religion is successfully at work nearly all the world over.

We can but allude to its ability to elevate yet higher, as well as to diffuse itself more widely. No one has ever yet become all that Christianity could make him. Still more truly may this be said of communities and nations. But there is an ever accelerating power in true religion when applied to the heart and life. If we lived only among the good, how much easier it would be to be good, and to become better still; and if all nations were as much leavened with Christian principles as our own, how rapidly we should ascend to a yet

loftier attitude. Now, it is evidently the will of God that the Gospel should be diffused universally, and He has therefore endowed His Church with great power for self-propagation. The Gospel is ever represented as needed by the whole world. All men are the creatures of God, and as all are fallen, all require a Saviour. The reasons which moved the Divine mind to provide help in one direction must equally influence Him in any other. The Divine love, therefore, and the Saviour's grace can nowhere stop short of a desire for the salvation of all mankind. And those who receive the gospel in its fulness, receive also the desire to spread it. It must be the wish of every one who has "tasted of the heavenly gift," that all others should taste it; and this desire, if not in every case, yet in great numbers, leads to active effort to diffuse it around. It is impossible that a true Christian can be content for any around him to remain in sin. And it is equally impossible for the Church to leave any tribe or country a prey to superstition. It must be aggressive, as it is intolerant of evil and impatient of limit or restraint; and this zeal for God's rights, this sympathy with Christ's all-comprehending love, this wish to rescue and save, this eagerness for spiritual conquest and acquisition, will itself suffice finally to give Christianity an universal dominion.

There is another line of argument to which we can do little more than call attention. There are signs everywhere that the religious condition of the world cannot remain as it is. Barbarous races are everywhere being invaded by the explorer, the colonist, the trader, and the Missionary; and their crude supersti-

tions cannot, in any instance, withstand the influence of the white stranger. Mahomedanism has lost almost all its former zeal and diffusive energy. It has power to resist, not to attack; and though life still exist in its members, at its heart it is torpid, decrepit, and almost dead. The vast superstitions of India and China exhibit every sign of disintegration. Contact with Western thought and ideas must as inevitably cause them to vanish away, as does the iceberg when drawn by the currents of ocean into warmer latitudes. But what shall take the place of these varied superstitions when they are dead, as die they must? Protestant Christianity is the only possibility left for the world. The rise of any great system of idolatry is now inconceivable. No system of deism has ever been the religion of a nation, or can be. The Greek Church has never been aggressive. It would belie all the signs of the times if Protestantism were to let her splendid power and promise be seized by the belated Papacy, bent as that is on going backward, not forward. Protestantism, or, we might say, Christianity, was never so strong as it is now, never had it such vantage ground from whence to issue to attack its adversaries, never was it more active, and never from so large a number of centres did it spread light and life around. Nowhere is it driven back and defeated. All forms of heathenism are now, not aggressive, but stagnant and on the defensive. Christianity alone is aggressive, and, of Christian systems, Protestantism alone is spreading. Must it not continue to do so?

We adduce a final argument for the universal

spread of Christianity from the fact, that from its establishment this end has been steadily set before it, and it has ever successfully advanced thereto. How weak and insignificant did the cause of Christ seem when He challenged the conquest of the whole world by the sublime command to His disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Luke xxiv. 47 ; Mark xvi. 20 ; Acts i. 8.) They went everywhere preaching the Word, and they triumphed so in every place, that by the close of the apostolic history churches were scattered over the extent of the civilised world. We know how exultingly Tertullian speaks of their increase early in the third century, and we know that a hundred years afterwards the Faith had won imperial power. Nor did it rest there. Its course was on and still on, until it had driven paganism right out of the civilised world, never more to return, and had won many barbarous tribes and races to itself, lifting them up, in spite of heresy, confusion, and corruption, towards strength, civilisation, and truth. We dare to say, that even in the middle ages, notwithstanding the rise of Moslemism and the blighting curse of the Papacy, Christianity was still spreading century by century, if not year by year.* But what an accelerated and undoubted expansion it has had since the Reformation—since the reign of Elizabeth—since the Hanoverian succession—since the beginning of this century ! Never was it so widely spread ; never had it so many firm and intelligent adherents ; never was it allied with greater power—political, commercial, and intellectual ; never had it less cause for fear ; and never was it more

* Liddon's Bampton Lectures, p. 133.

aspiring and hopeful. This onward march through the past must have its counterpart in the future. Analogy suggests it, the very genius of the religion necessitates it, and the fixed idea which has now taken possession of the Church, that Christianity must be universal, and through Christ win back the world to God, will fulfil itself.

CHAPTER XII.

ARGUMENTS AND MOTIVES FOR INCREASED DEVOTION TO MISSIONARY OBJECTS.

Appeal to Conscience.—Ministers.—Churches—Satisfaction and Comfort of individual Christians.—General Felicity of the Church.—Pastors: Teachers: Families: Reading Societies: Schools.—Men to be prepared.—A Church of Missionaries.—The benefit to be communicated.—Position of our Country.—State of the Church.—Prospects of Futurity.—Doctrine of Rewards flowing from the Doctrine of Grace.—Principles of Action.—Promise of the Saviour.—Final issue.

THE TRUE MISSIONARY ARGUMENT is an appeal to the conscience of every Christian, on the DUTY OF OBEYING THE EXPRESS COMMAND OF OUR LORD. There are many other arguments, branching out of this, and serving to place it in its true position. It may be well to show how those arguments enforce the duty of devotion to Missionary objects, and then to show the motives which, at the present time, are urging us to *increased* devotion.

FIRST *of all*. Let our consciences be fairly and fully imbued with the conviction that such, in fact, *is* our DUTY.

We have endeavoured to prove that the conveyance of the gospel to the understanding of every creature in all the world, is a work to which the Church is bound by solemn obligation—each individual in the

Church being called to the discharge of the obligation according to the measure of his light, opportunities, and means. The end of all narrations and treatises on the subject of Missions, is to call Christians to meditate on that duty, and to arouse them to a vigorous performance of it. Whatever views of Christian doctrine interfere with the clear apprehension or energetic fulfilment of such a duty must, for this very reason, be erroneous; and ought, on this very ground, to be rejected and opposed. The same principle is applicable to every mode of Christian profession, and to every style of ministerial instruction. If the mode of profession has a tendency to fetter the expansive operations of the whole Church, or if the style of ministerial instruction is not such as to awaken Christians, and keep them awake, to the work of spreading the gospel enjoined on them by their Lord, that mode is unscriptural, that style is fundamentally opposed to the style of the apostles.

It is clearly an essential branch of what is ordinarily termed clerical duty, to aim, by all means sanctioned in the Scriptures, at the conversion of the whole world. We have no right to restrict our solitudes to our particular parishes or congregations. We are to seek the salvation of all—and to stir up those who are called with a holy calling to sympathise in our pursuit, and to help us in the work. A truly weighty responsibility, in this matter, rests on the preachers of the gospel and the pastors of churches. Their public prayers should recognise, most distinctly, the binding duty of diffusing the gospel. Besides their more specific instructions and exhortations on this head, there ought to be a vein

of Missionary tendencies, a flame of Missionary ardour, pervading their ordinary addresses to the people. To what extent this is *now* the case generally, it is difficult to estimate. But, assuredly, were this ministerial pressing of the duty of Missionary enterprise constant and universal in our pulpit communications, we should see more life, and power, and activity in the Missionary operations of the Church. "It is an awful fact," wrote Mr. Ward of Serampore, "that the spirit of Missions has to Christianise the Church, before the Church can Christianise the world."

In urging the argument of Christian duty in this case, we cannot overlook the influence of so momentous a duty, heartily discharged, on the *satisfaction and comfort of our state as individuals*, and the consequent serenity and even joyfulness flowing in this channel throughout the entire Church. Obedience is the evidence of that faith through which we are saved by the grace of God in Christ Jesus. A Missionary spirit, combining the strength of principle with the fervency of love, in a wise and decided course of active effort for the conversion of the world, is the special sign of genuine faith on which the New Testament writers expatiate with the greatest warmth and frequency. How clear a proof does such a character exhibit of really believing the word of the gospel—of having "the Spirit of Christ,"—of being renewed after the image of God—where "Christ is all and in all!" How confidently, though in all humility of mind, may a man of such a spirit receive in application to himself the promises of God, deriving from those promises all the light, and succour, and joy, and purity, included in the privilege

of being made a "partaker of the divine nature." There can be no question that a mind thoroughly and practically imbued with this spirit obtains a fuller perception of the "glorious gospel," a firmer grasp of its privileges, a higher personal enjoyment of its comforts, and a much greater degree of power to walk according to its precepts in every branch of the Christian temper, than men who have not such a spirit can possibly imagine. He is cast in a finer mould than other men. His spirit breathes a purer air. His heart throbs with a holier and healthier action. He enters into a higher walk of existence. His range of thought, desire, purpose, calculation, is ampler—stretching into scenes which God enlightens with His own presence, and which are enriched with the mysteries of redemption, with the revelations of truth—a spiritual world brightened with the glories, or shadowed with the gloom of eternity. On such a mind, raised and upheld as it is by the power of the Holy Spirit, the vulgar temptations of *this* world's course have little power. He has nobler thoughts and better joys. He has deeper anxieties, grander struggles, than those which agitate the haunts of business or the fields of strife. He has got beyond them and above them. He looks back on them, and looks down on them, as on things that filled his mind in days of darkness. But now he is clothed with the armour of light. He is living for Christ. He is praying, and labouring as well as praying, for the coming of a heavenly kingdom.

For our own sakes, then, let us, by every means, and at all times, repair to those sources from which we may imbibe an increase of the Missionary spirit.

And let us not be afraid to drink deeply. Let us not be afraid of more spiritual apprehensions. Let us not be afraid of more dignity of character. Let us not be afraid of yielding to impulses that come from God. Let us not shrink from happiness.

Were individual Christians fully to believe their own religion, and faithfully to serve their Saviour in devotion to the work for which He lived, and died, and reigns, who does not see the ten thousand channels through which the streams of joy and gladness would overflow the general body of the Church,—the joy and gladness, we mean, which the Church would feel, in the very act of doing that which is at once the evidence and the means of her prosperity. It is the ordinance of God, and it is the promise of God, that His Church, in watering shall be watered, in blessing shall be blessed, in exercising her gifts shall increase them. And the providence of God has ever acted in accordance with the appointments and predictions of His grace. The prosperity of the Church is in the line of Missionary operation. Her best days (we must reiterate the statement) were the days of her greatest activity in the spreading of the gospel; and the return of those days is hastened or deferred according to the measure in which such activity revives.*

* These remarks are all verified in the facts of individual and congregational history. No person can be carefully and extensively acquainted with the condition of Christian communities throughout our land, without being struck with the connection which exists between their internal prosperity and attractiveness, and the amount of zeal, sympathy, and aid displayed by them toward objects beyond themselves. Where there is much of the latter there is also much of the former; and where selfishness thinks only of home, it is visited with a sterile curse, which miserably defeats its narrow calculations. Too frequently the excuse is:—

Our appeal to the conscience of each Christian is, therefore, strengthened by our regard for the happy enjoyment of the gospel in the heart of each Christian; and it is still further enforced by our consideration for the general felicity of the Church. Let every Christian cherish a deep and conscientious conviction that, in as much as the conversion of the world is to be attained by means of human agency, he is personally responsible to Christ for exerting a portion of that agency. Let Christian *families* include the objects of the Christian Missions within the circle of their domestic cares, and the means of furthering those objects within the scheme of their domestic economy and calculations. Let every Christian *pastor and teacher* infuse, with due regard to the harmony of truth, a large portion of Missionary intelligence and excitement into his wonted ministrations. Let the conductors of libraries and reading societies avail themselves of the power afforded them for giving a decidedly Missionary tincture to the literature they circulate. Let schools be impregnated with the living germs of Missionary thoughts and habits. Let young men and young women of decided

“We are poor, and that which we can do is so little, that it is not worth doing at all;” or, “All that we can do we need for ourselves;” or, “We have this to do, and that, and must defer all help to Missions until some less burdensome time.” Anyhow, the noble cause is altogether sacrificed, or but coldly aided; and if the result be injurious to it, far more so is it to those who act thus. We are persuaded that there are thousands of congregations now doing little or nothing for Missions, or doing something reluctantly, which would begin to enter on a new life of internal peace, progress, and holiness, if they could but rise above their selfishness, and receive the principles and impulses of a lofty and disinterested evangelization. “There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty.”

piety, of promising abilities, of well-disciplined education, be introduced within the sphere of Missionary impulses. In such a quickening climate of Christian society, it cannot but be that a race of Missionary men and women will rise up. Out of such a race of Christian people, there will be no difficulty in obtaining that which is now the *chief* difficulty—men to do the work of preaching the gospel to the heathen. It is to be feared that, as in former times, Christians will be *driven* to a work, to which we are unwilling to be drawn. In our own country, every course of successful industry is crowded with disappointed expectants. But the world is before us;—we are called to spread the gospel through the world;—we have not obeyed the call;—and God is placing us in circumstances in which we shall do well to consider, whether His Providence is not concurring with His Word, to stimulate us to the work we have been too long neglecting. Commercial and social difficulties may do that in the nineteenth century for Britons, which persecution did, in the first century, for Jews, in the sixteenth for German Protestants, and, in the seventeenth, for the English founders of the American churches. May not British Christians, as such, lay to heart the apparent workings of Divine Providence, and might not large and intelligent groups of pious men and women now be found in various parts of our country, who are so situated that they might feel it to be a duty—and, at the same time, find it to be an advantage, in all respects—to emigrate on Christian principles, and with a specific view to the establishment of Christian institutions in the midst of heathen lands?

Independently of these hints, it would be a good thing for our churches at home, a good sign of growing spirituality, and a decided means of promoting their prosperity, if efforts were wisely and diligently carried on with a particular view to the calling out of well furnished and believing men, to go forth into the Missionary field. Whilst we have so many that are willing and able to preach the gospel at home, ought there not to be a general and constant course pursued, by which a much larger body might be raised of candidates for the same work abroad? The labours of Missionary Societies at home have been too much, yet of necessity, directed to the procuring of funds for the support of Missions. But the necessary funds would pour in more freely and in much greater abundance, if there were in all our churches a higher tone of that Missionary devotion by which proper men are to be elicited and sent forth by their brethren, "*commending them to the grace of God.*" It is with this view, more especially, that these pages have been thus occupied. A MISSIONARY CHURCH IS A CHURCH COMPOSED OF MISSIONARIES. How far this is from being the ostensible character of the Church of Christ! It is true we cannot all go to the heathen. But, are we all to stay at home, till persecution or distress compel us to wander through the world? Ought there not to be a deeper and more general interest in the Missionary work amongst Christians, as Christians—Christian families, as families—Christian ministers, as ministers—Christian churches, as churches? And would not that wider and more general interest secure a larger body of well qualified Missionaries? And would not the

sending out of such a body of Missionaries, amid the hopes and prayers of their believing brethren, be followed by an ample provision of all the aid they might require? And is it not as clear as the theory of the gospel, illustrated by the history of the gospel, can make it, that such a state of active devotion to the work of Missions amongst the heathen would be at once the sign of great prosperity, and the means of still greater prosperity, throughout the whole Church?

Let us not forget the nature and amount of the BENEFIT we are proposing, by Christian Missions, to communicate to all the nations of the earth. It is "The Gospel." It is scarcely possible to spread the gospel without scattering, in our way, the seeds of civilisation, of freedom, of order, of science, of domestic peace, and of public safety. But quite distinct from these, and far above them, is the blessing entrusted to us for the advantage of the world. It is pre-eminently—emphatically—simply "THE GOSPEL." After all that has been so ably written and so eloquently said, in advocating Christian Missions, let us keep in memory the simplicity of our object. It is an object dignified by its association with truth—the truth of God—the truth of God revealed to man universally, that by believing it he may be saved. We know of no salvation for ourselves but that which is through faith in Jesus Christ. It is only by virtue of the universal aspect of this gospel that we are guided to any personal hope of forgiveness, and meetness for a happy futurity. What we were without the gospel, that the heathen are now. What we now are, by means of the gospel, that the heathen may become, will become, when the gospel

is preached to them as it has been to us. *Whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish.* Is there not a lurking scepticism in the bosom of the Church on this—the plainest and most vital truth in all the Scriptures? Unless Christians are prepared to affirm—that the atonement of Christ was unnecessary—that idolaters are not, as such, sinners—that the heathen are not living in that perishing state from which the gospel has been the instrument of our salvation—that the heathen are *known* to have been converted to God more frequently and more extensively without the gospel than with it—they must surely be convinced that the sending of “The Gospel” to every human being is the highest charity which earth can witness, as well as the most solemn duty which God has enjoined. And shall Christians imbibe the old scepticism of the ungodly, to steel their hearts against the faith of apostles, against the command of their Saviour, and against the claims of their brethren?

It is for every man who hears the gospel to believe it without delay, for his own present and eternal salvation. And it remains for every believer to weigh the arguments which demonstrate his particular duty to the world. Whether we think of the sanctity of our obligations—the worth of our privileges—the principles involved in our profession—the pleasure of our Lord in this matter—or the glory that will redound to Him from the simplicity and energy of our efforts to make known His name and His atonement to the world,—whithersoever we turn our thoughts, the motives to increased devotion in the Missionary work flash on our consciences and melt our hearts.

In concluding these chapters, we cannot refrain from urging on the reader's attention some of those views of things around us which serve to corroborate every argument, and to give pungency to every appeal on behalf of Christian Missions.

Let us look at the POSITION OF OUR COUNTRY. A dispensation of the gospel has been committed unto us. As for those amongst us who "reject the counsel of God against themselves," let us pray for them, and warn them, before they pass away into a world where they will find, too late, that all they have been rejecting was true, and divine, and gracious! But as for those of us who do believe unto the saving of our souls, let us look at the high vantage ground on which God has placed us, for the sake of other nations. We are a free, a spirited, an enterprising people. Our language has been flying on the wings of the wind over all the world. Our commerce traces every sea, and links us with every country. We hold an empire of terrific responsibility in the East; in the West we claim possessions and affinities unequalled, of which, though the past history is darkened by the national crime of slavery, the future history is being brightened by the fruits of a Christian people's repentance, with justice and mercy following; whilst in the Australian colonies another and a greater England is rapidly rising up to power. Our influence is, at the present time, more commanding than that of any other nation. Wherefore has God dealt thus with us? Surely not to pamper our pride, or to arm us with the power of standing before all other people in the foolish attitude of boasting or defiance! It seems to the most rational and sober

thinkers, that our position is assigned us by the King of nations, for the spiritual welfare of the world. Without arrogating to ourselves a superiority over other countries, it is the dictate both of wisdom and of piety that we should avail ourselves of every advantage for the communication of the gospel, which we have, to those who have it not, under the conviction that our advantages are bestowed on us for this very purpose. That we have greatly lost sight of this truth is to be unfeignedly lamented. To redeem the time is our present duty. Let us do our work. If we do it not—then should our country perish in the wreck of nations—which may God, in His mercy, forbid!—the unfaithfulness of England to the gospel given her for the nations, will be the blackest spot in that ascending cloud of sins which will bring down the thunder of His power for her destruction.

On the Churches of England, the call to effort in the propagation of the gospel is loud, and clear, and solemn. For aught we know, that night in which we cannot work is already gathering its gloom around us. It has not yet come. It may be far distant. It is our privilege to know nothing that is before us. If ever there were churches on whom rested a peculiar obligation, they are ours. If ever there was a time in which that obligation pressed closely and tightly around the minds of men, we are fallen on such times. We are rich in the fruits of experience. History has told her tale for our instruction. Men of former days have bequeathed to us the treasure of their wisdom. If we cast our eyes around us, we behold all the signs of a new epoch, a fresh starting point for the minds of

men. There is everywhere a war of principles. New speculations are afloat, and exploded errors are revived. Men are panting for what is new, or clinging with the tenacity of a death-grasp to what is old. An age of vigorous and united action for good or for evil is rapidly advancing. Public opinion is acquiring a force never known before. This is not the time for the churches of Britain to slumber. We must either conquer the world or be conquered by it. Of ourselves we cannot conquer. But He who has lifted up His standard in the midst of us, has the power to conquer, and the will. "*He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet.*" He is the "*Head over all things to THE CHURCH.*" As portions of His one Church, let British Christians press every advantage, improve every talent. Let us all consecrate ourselves to the service of Christ in the conversion of the world to Him. In the cultivation of our secret piety, in the promotion of domestic religion, and in all our separate or combined endeavours for the spiritual good of those who are locally related to us, let us hourly keep in view the ultimate design of the public ministry, and of private instruction, and, indeed, of the whole Christian dispensation — "*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.*" Let Christians care for the world, pray for the world, and preach the gospel to the world, and they will exhibit the character, and share the joy, of THE MISSIONARY CHURCH.

No truth is more clearly revealed in the gospel than the perfectly gratuitous nature of our personal salvation. It is the "*GIFT of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" All the blessings received by the penitent

believer, from his first conviction of sin through the whole enjoyment of eternity, are graciously vouchsafed to him for the sake of Jesus Christ. In full accordance with this fundamental principle of the gospel, THE PROSPECTS OF FUTURITY are so presented to believers in Jesus Christ, as to excite them to fidelity and diligence in discharging their duty to their Redeemer. He is their Lord as well as their Saviour; He demands their service no less than their confidence. In His character as the Supreme Master, He has committed to His servants their various capacities and opportunities of usefulness; has taught them that these capacities and opportunities of usefulness are to be conscientiously and unremittingly employed in His service, and with a single regard to His authority, and will, and honour; has assured them that their means of honouring Him shall gather strength from use; and has raised their expectations towards the coming of that day, when He will scrutinise their service, receive their account, and reward them according to their works. To be "accepted of Him" is the grand object of Christian ambition, purified by His Spirit from all selfish motives and earthly views. To receive "the crown of righteousness" is the aim of every one who "fights a good fight," who "keeps the faith, who finishes his course." Our Lord Himself was sustained in His Cross and Passion by "the joy set before Him." His apostles had respect to the recompense of the reward. And the early Christians laboured in the spread of the gospel with a clear and unsophisticated view of the heavenly state as containing the reward of those who, having

been justified by faith, and saved by grace, have sought glory, honour, and immortality, by patient continuance in well doing.

The doctrine of REWARD has, indeed, been often perverted, so as to place the righteousness of man in the place of the perfect work of Christ, or so as to mingle it, in some measure, with the work of Christ in the grand article of the sinner's acceptance with God. The error is a very gross one, leading men utterly astray. But, on the other hand, the doctrine of GRACE has also been perverted. It has been taken away from its connection with the principles of human nature and the principles of the government of God. Thus perverted and distorted from its true position in the harmonious scheme of divine truth, the notion *substituted* for the Christian doctrine of grace has produced on men's minds and characters an effect precisely the reverse of that which it is the object of all truth to secure. It has made them torpid in their consciences, instead of being quick and tender. It has made them selfish in their affections, instead of being kind and liberal. It has made them narrow and shrivelled in their conceptions, instead of being vigorous and expansive. It has made them indolent and sentimental in their professed religious character, instead of being active, and self-denying, and assiduous in their labours for the salvation of a dying world. Doctrines of the gospel which are *there* introduced for the encouragement of believers suffering and working for the spiritual benefit of their fellow-men, have been purloined, if we may so express it, from the classes of believers to whom they belong, and made to minister

to the pride and slothfulness of a very different class indeed. Now between these two extremes we find the true doctrine—the rewards bestowed by Christ Himself on those who rely on Him for salvation, and bestowed by Him according to their fidelity in warm and simple-hearted devotion to His service. We ought not to overlook the simple truth, that the happiness of the future state arises not more from its positive safety and glory, than from its full development of principles, implanted within us by Divine grace, and disciplined by Divine providence in the present state.

What those principles are, it is easy to perceive. They must be those by which we are made to resemble the character and to exemplify the spirit of our Lord and Saviour—His meekness in suffering—His patience under provocation—His constancy in action—His supreme regard to His Father's will—His tender compassion towards sinful and suffering men—His entire devotion of Himself to the work of human salvation—His simple and energetic improvement of every hour and every opportunity for accomplishing the ends of His incarnation, working "*the works of Him that sent Me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work.*" Whilst the happiness of the future state is to result from the development of this character in believers, we are taught to expect that happiness as consisting in a very high degree of social as well as personal enjoyment. And of that social happiness a principal element will be found, in the consciousness and recollection of spiritual good communicated and received by the instrumental agencies appointed in the Church on earth. Happy will every convert be!

But happier still the honoured instrument of his conversion! Happy will every sinner be that has been brought to Jesus here, and to heaven hereafter, from the darkness and pollutions of idolatry! But happier than even he, the faithful and devoted Missionary who left the house of his fathers with the simple aim, and in the believing hope, of leading this his fellow sinner to salvation! The entire economy of the Divine government shows us that the permanent bliss of futurity is the result of present character, and that the degree of the bliss will rise according to the degree in which the character has been matured. The whole tenor of the gospel assures us that the glory of the eternal kingdom will be vouchsafed to the redeemed for the sake of the atonement of their Lord, and in proportion as they have imbibed His spirit. It is *His* glory, *His* joy, *His* reward—and it is as members of Him, as sympathising with Him, as being like Him, as following Him, that they are to behold His glory, to enter into His joy, to share His reward, sitting down with Him on His throne. And, truly, he who has done and suffered the most on earth, in the solemn consecration of himself and his all to Christ, in the extension of His gospel, will be at once the humblest and the most exalted of all the saints in heaven.

Fired by such hopes, urged by motives of so much stimulus and power, let every member of the Missionary Church brace every nerve. The course is before us. Our Leader sits on the throne. He holds forth the prize. He warns us—amidst the temptations to erroneous views of our duty, or to sloth unworthy of our privileges—He warns us of the curse awaiting

the *unprofitable servant*. And to cheer us in discouragement, as well as to call forth our best and noblest energies in fulfilment of that work which He has given us to do, and which we must not, will not, dare not neglect, He opens before our faith the fulness of that glory and rejoicing, in which we shall for ever feel the value and the freeness of His approbation. “*Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*”

The joy of thy Lord! What words are these, may every Christian say! The joy of thy Lord! And shall I—a sinful man, who might have been driven for my sins into banishment from His presence, shall I enter, not only into the place of safety, and light, and bliss, but into the joy of my Lord? When He shall look back on the scenes of Judea and Galilee, rejoicing that He lived with men, and died for them, shall *I* enter into that joy? When He rejoices in the ineffable manifestations of His Father’s love, well pleased in Him, shall *I* enter into that joy? When He rejoices in that look of triumph with which He surveys the enemies He has foiled, the victories He has achieved, shall *I* enter into that joy? When He rejoices in the hymns of praise and services of love wherewith the multitude of His redeemed shall worship Him throughout an eternal Sabbath in the temple of His glory, shall *I* enter into that joy? Yes, fellow Christian, *thou* shalt enter into that joy, if thou art till death a good and faithful servant of that Lord! Let the Missionary think of this, and let it rouse him to effort, and encourage him to perfect the *work of faith* and the *labour of love* in

the *patience of hope* in our Lord Jesus Christ. Let the Churches think of this, and let it stir them up to such exertions as they can make, and all they can make, to carry the tidings of salvation through the world. Let us work now. Let us work daily. Let us all work. Let us work in faith. Let us work with prayer. Let us work in hope. Let us work in love. Soon shall we leave the things that are seen, and be conversant only with the things that are not seen. Let us bring the prospects of futurity home to our hearts, as they were brought home to the hearts of believers in the times when the Church was alive to her responsibility, and calmly anticipated her reward.

And, oh, who can think, without being raised, and purified, and urged, in all his spiritual sympathies and principles, of the reward which awaits a faithful Church! What a meeting *that*, which shall consummate the history of the Church! What mysteries will then be developed,—mysteries of providence, and mysteries of grace,—in the progress of the Church through all her trials and delinquencies, her persecutions, corruptions, reforms, divisions, revivals, to that age of light and purity, of prosperity and glory, of union and of effort, which, we believe, awaits her even on earth! And then, when the years of time shall merge in eternity, when the themes of prophecy and the hopes of ages shall be explained and verified before the throne of God and of the Lamb, what crowns of joy, what palms of victory, what songs of praise, what sounds and sights, what greetings and recognitions, will attest the faithfulness of the Lord we serve, and the wisdom of

being *now* devoted to His service with all our hearts, and with all our powers! It is our duty, as believers in Jesus Christ. If we are faithful in discharging the duty, He will reward us. Let us believe—act—and wait—as servants that are looking for their Lord. “BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY; AND MY REWARD IS WITH ME, TO GIVE EVERY MAN ACCORDING AS HIS WORK SHALL BE.AMEN. EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS.”

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